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patterns

FORTY-FIFTH EDITION

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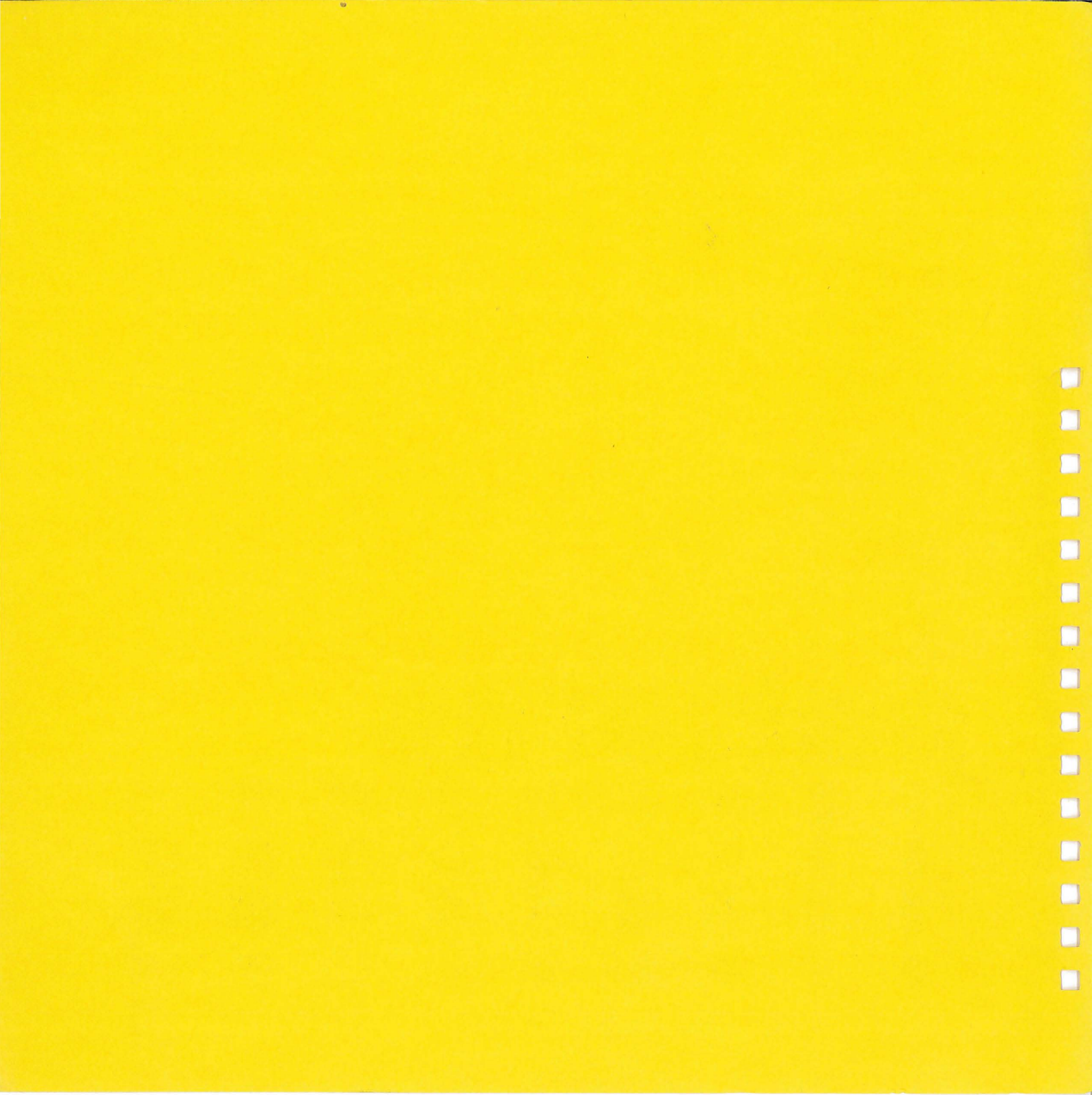
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april



patterns

FORTY-FIFTH EDITION

april 2003

Preface

It is with no small amount of pride that we present this 45th edition of *Patterns*. Literary journals are so often will o' the wisp affairs that the ability to brag of nearly a half-century of continuous publication marks the kind of longevity that a great many professional journals could envy.

It is fitting, then, that the contents of this edition can be said to offer something old and something new, as the saying goes. Turn these leaves, and you'll discover plenty of good, old-fashioned story telling in the venerable tradition of the American short story and personal essay; but you'll also turn up a number of new and experimental voices and visions. How appropriate to see that as our publication ages [like a fine wine, we hope] it continues to show the youthful spirit of its featured artists.

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dedication

KATHLEEN NICKERSON



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During the celebration of the 45th anniversary of *Patterns* and the 80th anniversary of St. Clair County Community College, it is appropriate to reflect upon gifts given to us by our beloved faculty member, Kathleen Nickerson. Her zest for life, love of teaching, commitment to the College, and involvement with people were cornerstones of her life.

Kathy was an enthusiastic teacher. She felt deeply about literature, read voraciously, and carried her love of the written word into the classroom. Her joy in the well turned phrase was unbounded, and it was not unusual to see her rush out of her office, hand on breast, to breathlessly share a fine piece of student writing. Poetry was a passion and her favorite part of any literature class. Kathy could wax poetic about metaphoric language, making sure that students' understanding went far beyond

surface meanings. As a teacher, she expected a great deal of her students, but never more than she, herself, gave to the class. Kathy entered each class prepared to teach twice as long as the time allowed; thus, each semester, she warned her students that she talked fast and expected sharp listening skills. She kept current with new thinking about her craft, frequently participating in conferences and classes. The summer before her illness was diagnosed, Kathy attended a conference in Toronto where it was suggested the participants read 50 books prior to the Children's Literature sessions. She readily complied and shared the experience with her students when she returned.

Kathy was dedicated to our college and participated in many areas. She was active on committees in her own English department, but also immersed herself in committees and events of the entire campus. She was involved in Professional Development, MAHE, *Patterns*, and the Wellness Committee. Kathy and her husband, Bob, regularly attended art shows, band concerts, plays, and basketball games, offering support to her students and fellow faculty members. Connections with people were immensely important to her, and she had many friends among the

staff. Kathy enjoyed the SC4 gatherings where she could be heard asking people about current projects, trips taken during school breaks, an ill spouse. Staff held her in high esteem, steering family and friends into her classes. As well, a legion of students became friends because Kathy cared about them. When a student came into her office, the talk would proceed from questions about a piece of literature or a paper in process to inquiry about the individual's other classes, family, and work. She remembered friends' special moments with notes, cards, and gifts.

While we miss her and all that she meant to our lives, Kathy remains with us through remembrance of her gifts to us: her love of life, literature, and people. We can well imagine that she would be an enthusiastic attendee of the *Patterns*' reception, chatting with students, enjoying the presentations and awards. In the coming week, Kathy might be found rushing out of her office to share a poem from *Patterns* or point out a piece of artwork that moved her. Her joy transcends, and we are all enriched by our connection to her memory.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Catherine Moore*

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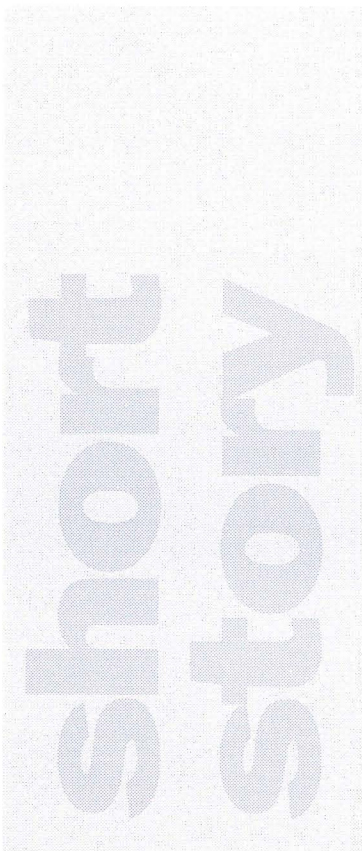
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RICHARD J. COLWELL AWARD

“A Reason Why”

What attracts one about this story is its deft use of realistic detail and dialogue, as well as its sure unfolding of the plot elements. The characters are believable from the start, and the author's style carries us along as if we were seamlessly a part of that world. It is fast paced but allows plenty of time for the reader to gather the essential details that reveal the essence of the characters through dialogue and description. It has a fine imagistic ending that leaves the reader with a culminating picture that sums the essence of the story's point.

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FIRST PLACE SHORT STORY

“Squirrelaphobia”

This story compels by its voice, its first person narrator. The story moves briskly, borrowing from essay techniques, and includes humor - one of the more difficult things to use in any writing. There is a nice counterpointing between what the narrator knows and what the audience knows of the narrator.

SECOND PLACE SHORT STORY

“The Farmer's Wife”

A simple calm scene is interrupted by tragedy - a usual subject, but in this story the focus is on Ella's response and inner struggle. Her character is revealed as much by the good descriptions as by her actions and speech, somewhat in the tradition of Eudora Welty.



a reason why

RACHEL SHARRARD

The yelling stirred him and he buried his head under the musty pillow. At the shattering of glass he moaned and reached over to raise the volume of rap music booming out of the CD player next to the mattress on the floor. Outside his small room the argument continued. The woman's shrill voice and a man's deeper, though younger, one did battle as he lay curled under the brown, moth eaten blanket and clutched the pillow over his ear. An hour of this passed, ending with the slam of a door. Two brown paint chips dropped on the pillow as he lifted it from his head and slowly got up from the mattress.

He crossed the room to stand in front of a smeared mirror next to a pile of clothes. His hand wiped at his face, rubbed the stubble on his chin, as he stared at the image. Standing 6'3" he had to hunch down to see his face in the full length mirror. As he hunched over he pulled his shoulders forward and flexed his arms, checking the mirror for a view of his muscles. He stood up, took in a breath, and punched his stomach a few times. Then he quickly dropped to the "Welcome" mat under his bare feet and did some sit-ups, counting aloud as he did them, until he reached 150. He rolled

over to the brown linoleum floor and began to do some push ups when the woman's voice was heard yelling from outside the room.

"Willieeee! Get you ass outta bed! You go get a shower, boy, and go out an' get you a job. I ain't supporting you to lay in bed all day!"

He got up from the floor and selected a pair of large dark denim pants and a deep red sweatshirt with a brand name splayed across the front, which were folded in a box by the front door. Picking up some underwear and socks, he left the room and crossed the hall.

Showered, shaved, and dressed he went to the kitchen where his mother sat at the card table under the window. Browned wallpaper lined the walls with tiny plates and forks, which had once appeared clean. Sunlight from the window was bent away by the cloud of cigarette smoke that surrounded the woman. Without glancing at her, William crossed the room to the refrigerator and removed the eggs and butter. As he began to make his daily helping of scrambled eggs, her glassy eyes followed his movements; and she puffed on her cigarette.

"Ya know, you an' you brother are ungrateful s.o.b.'s. You just come an' go when ya want, eatin' all my

food, stealin' my money and havin' no job. I outta kick ya out, botha ya."

William stood with his back to her and stirred his eggs as they cooked in the pan. Minutes ticked by with the sounds of puffing cigarette and metal fork on pan, stirring eggs.

With his cooked eggs, William sat at the opposite end of the table. He glanced at his mom as he ate.

"Boy, you are nineteen now, my baby; but you really need to be getting a job."

"I'm going looking today mom, with Bones in his dad's car. We're going all over."

"Hum, Bones."

"Well, he's got a car."

"At least you shaved. That good. Say, why don't ya pick me up some gigs when you're out."

"Can't ma, I don't have any money."

"Now, I know ya got some stashed in that safe of yours. Why ya have that I'll never know. Ya outta sell it and help pay rent, but I's know ya got something' in there for some cigarettes. All those times I lent you some, it's the least you could do."

"Sorry, ma" William quickly got up from table and tossed the pan in the sink. He went to his room, shutting the door, and brushed

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PATTERNS
Colwell Award

aside the pile of dirty clothes, to reveal a small silver safe. He turned the dial quickly, opened the door and withdrew a brown leather wallet from under a stack of papers. He opened it to count the three twenties, grabbed a pack of cigarettes also under the papers, quickly shut the safe and left the house out the back door. Out on the sidewalk he could hear his mother yelling out the kitchen window.

"You ungrateful ass, bring me some cigarettessss!"

A cool fall wind blew leaves against his face as he walked the three blocks to Bones' house. He stuffed his hands in his pockets, took out a cigarette, lit it, and smoked as he bent his head down against the wind. He did not bother to look up when Mr. Washington called "hello" from atop his ladder where he was hanging Christmas lights.

He walked in Bones' house through the back door and down the basement steps without knocking.

"Hey, man, it's me," he called out as walked down the stairs.

The basement was a large bedroom for Bones with the furnace and water heater stashed in the back corner. The walls were painted black, a black shag carpet covered the cement floor and a black light hung above the large bed with a down white comforter. Smoke filled the room, leaking out of a cigarette stuck in an ashtray near the corner of the room where Bones sat on a black bean bag chair playing a video game.

"Hey, man, that was a crazy party last night wasn't it?" Bones didn't turn to speak as he raced a car on the screen.

"For sure. That one chick was fucked up."

"Yeh, she puked on the sidewalk after you left. Hey, what was up with you, anyway? Why'd you leave so early?"

"I got stuff to do today, remember? I didn't wanta be all..."

"Oh, man, right!" Bones paused the game and turned around to face William leaned back on the bed. "You're goin' to Tina's house today! I forgot. That's wild. What ya goin' to do anyway? I mean how old is the kid anyway?"

"He's like three months."

"So, like what you going to say to her? Did she ask you for any money?"

"No, I just asked if I could come over and see him. She sounded kinda pissed but she said yes. I ain't giving her any money till I see him. What if he really isn't mine?"

"Man, I don't know. I don't know how'd she'd have time to be with anyone else. You two were hot and heavy. You were straight crazy for her. I thought you two were about to get married and shit." Bones turned around and continued his game.

"Man, I was eighteen! I'm not ready for all that. She was fun and all, but she don't have no clue about who I am. It ain't happening."

"Willie, you don't know."

"Why'd she have to mess it up and get pregnant?"

"Shit happens."

"Hey, she probably gained like one hundred pounds like your sister anyway and I'll walk in and the kid

will be all white with blond hair an blue eyes and I'll be in the clear."

"Chill on the sister thing, she's 'big, black and beautiful', don't ya know!" The two laughed as Bones spoke in a high voice and stuck out his chest in imitation. He paused the game and got up from the chair. "You are straight stressing. I got what you need. I rolled up one before you came over. You got a lighter?"

"Na, man, I just need a ride up there. What time is it?"

Bones turned his wrist and looked at his watch.

"It's like 3:00."

"I'm supposed to be there right now! Come on, think you're dad will let you take the car?"

"Chill, man. I'll take you. He's sleeping right now, I'll just run you up real quick. You're going to have to take a cab home, though, I got plans tonight."

William stuffed out the cigarette in the ashtray of the Lincoln ten minutes later as Bones pulled up to a large white colonial house decorated with blue Christmas lights. He let out a deep sigh and sat looking out the window at the house.

"Just call me tomorrow, Will; let me know how it goes."

With another sigh William got out of the car and walked to the front door, knocking in the middle of the large wreath that hung there. The Lincoln rumbled away as a large man with a brown beard and glasses opened the door. He stood in the doorway and stared at William.

A folded newspaper hung from his right hand, which also held the door. His left arm blocked the entryway, his left hand on the door frame.

"Um, hello, sir, I'm here to see Tina."

"Hello."

"Hello, Mr. O' Conner" William looked up from the porch planks to the man.

"You are here to see the baby."

"Well, yes." The man's hand stayed on the door frame. "I called. She said I could come over at 3:00."

"It's 3:30."

"Yeh, I had trouble with, well, yes, I'm late."

"Perhaps a little more than a half hour." William cleared his throat and returned his gaze to the porch planks. "Come in, come in." With a sigh Mr. O' Conner stepped aside to let William in. "Just take you're boots off and go on upstairs. Tina is in her room."

"Thank you, sir, um, thank you."

William removed his shoes and walked to the top of the stairs, turned down the hall on the right and knocked on the second door on the left.

"Come in."

He opened the door and stood in the hallway looking around the room. Next to the four poster bed with pink ruffles a crib was pushed next to the wall below a shelf of play horses. Opposite the bed, a white changing table and dresser flanked a wooden desk. The room was dim, lighted only by a small lamp on a table

next to a rocking chair in the back of the room. She sat rocking in the chair, holding a bottle to what appeared to be a small bundle of blankets. Her chestnut colored hair was pulled back in a low ponytail, curly wisps framed her face; her large green eyes turned to him as he entered the room.

"Hello, Tina."

She looked down at the bundle and responded. "You can come in, William." He crossed the room and stood in front of her.

"How have you been, Tina?"

Her eyes on the bundle, she took a white cloth from the table and tossed it on her right shoulder. Placing the bottle next to the lamp, she moved the bundle onto her shoulder and gently patted. The top piece of blanket fell down, revealing a small head of glossy black curls.

"What's his name?"

She bit a small piece of her bottom lip. Two tears rolled down each cheek. She turned and looked at the baby.

"Justin Michael O' Conner" she half smiled as she said it.

"Justin Michael. That's nice. May I hold him?"

She quickly looked up at him and then back to the baby. A loud burp sounded in the still room, and the two laughed in response.

"I guess. He'll probably be off to sleep soon." She slowly stood up, watching the baby's face. "Sit down and I'll hand him to you." William sat down in the chair and Tina bent over and placed the baby against his chest. The baby squirmed and cooed as he was moved. "Just put your arm under

his head, right there. You're fine, just relax. Here, just hold the bottle. He may want some more. Got it?" She stepped back and sat on the bed, watching him.

He pulled a corner of the blue blanket away from the baby's face. A gasp escaped his lips as small brown eyes stared back at him. Black curls framed chubby cheeks. The baby's skin was dark, just a few shades lighter than William's, and some milk ran down his chin as he smiled up at William. William smiled back.

"Hi there, little guy." A small fist reached up from the blanket and tugged on William's pinkie finger. "Hey, you've got a grip there. You're a strong boy." William's deep voice crackled in the whisper. Without a word, Tina turned and raced from the room, shutting the door behind her.

William sat and rocked the baby, fed him the bottle. The room was still and he sat staring into brown eyes, small reflections of his own; as they slowly closed in sleep. Muffled noises sounded in the room. Pots clanged, a phone rang, footsteps in the hall, and he wrapped the blue blanket around the baby's exposed ear. William smiled when a smile flashed on the baby's face in a dream. This is how Tina found them an hour later when she returned.

She softly shut the door and sat on the bed, facing the two. "Is he sleeping?" William looked up and shook his head yes. "William, what are you going to do? Why did you call me?" He looked at her and opened his mouth, but no words came out. "You can talk, he won't wake up." William looked down again at the baby.

"I don't know Tina. I don't have a job yet."

"It's not about money William. My parents are going to help out till I graduate and can get my own place. I just want to know what you are going to do. You never called before. I thought you didn't want to, well, that you didn't care."

William looked down at the sleeping boy in his arms. "It's not that. I care, I really do. He's so beautiful."

"Yes, he looks like his dad."

William looked at her and smiled. "I'm sorry, Tina. I've just, I don't know. For everything, I'm sorry."

"You didn't think he was yours, did you?"

"No, I knew. I knew from the beginning. I even knew he was going to be a boy. I just wasn't ready, you know?"

Tina let out a deep breath and looked down at the floor. "Yes, I know."

"I want to see him. I want to be here for him."

"You do?" She looked at him. "Don't just say that."

"No, I do." He reached down and kissed the chubby hand circling his pinkie. A small tear fell down Tina's cheek.

"Well, we're eating dinner soon, so maybe..."

"Yeh, I gotta get going."

"Here hand him to me. I'll put him in the crib." Carefully he handed her the baby and she placed him in the crib. Quietly, he followed her out the room. They stood by the closed door in the hall and faced one another. William reached back and grabbed his wallet.

"Here, Tina, this isn't a lot, but it's all I have right now." He held out the three twenties.

"William, you just don't get it, do you?"

"What?"

"It's not about that. It's about being here. About just one day never calling. About giving a damn. About being here." And in a whisper, "About being a father." She looked away, toward the stairs.

"I'm sorry. Things have been fucked up. I'm going to make it better, I promise. Please, just take this." She turned and ripped the money from his hand.

"Fine."

"I'll call you tomorrow."

"Fine."

"Bye, Tina."

Leaving her in the hallway, he went down the stairs to his boots and let himself out. He turned south off the porch and jogged to the pay phone at a 7-Eleven a mile down the road.

The next morning he awoke to the phone ringing next to his ear. Groggily, he reached over, knocked over the CD player and grabbed the phone.

"Hello."

"Hey, man. It's Bones. I had a wild night last. Wait till you hear about it. But, first, how did it go with Tina? Give me the juice!"

"Uh, what?"

"Wake up, Willie. How'd it go?"

William sat up on the mattress and looked around the brown walls, the linoleum floor, a pile of dirty

clothes half concealing the silver safe.

Through the halo of loud music coming from the still working CD player, his mother's yell came through. "William! Get ya ass outta bed! Get off the damn phone and get out here. We're about to eat this damn Thanksgiving, get your ass out here now boy!"

William sighed. "Bones, man, it was dumb. I don't think I'm going back there. She was straight trippin' on me. And I don't even think the kid really looks like me. I don't know, maybe. But it was nuts. I don't know what she wants from me. Her daddy's got enough money. Ain't nothing I can do for her. There's no space in my room for a damn crib."

Bones laughed, "I know that's right. But, hey man..."

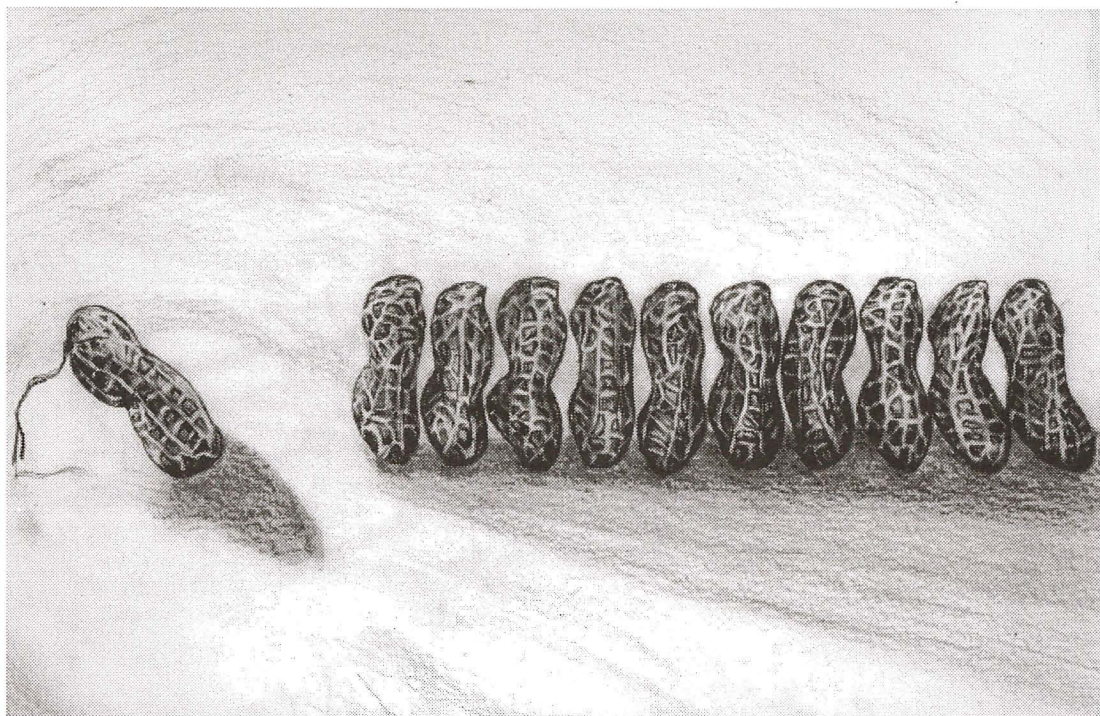
"Willieeee!"

"Hey, man, gotta go. I'll call you later."

With a click of the phone he got up and went to the mirror. He rubbed his hand down his face, hunched down, and stared in the mirror into his eyes. He stood up and looked around again at the small room. A brown blanket covering a mattress, a pile of dirty clothes, a box of clean ones, and a mirror enclosed a dingy mat on a linoleum floor. Turning back to the mirror, he drew back his right arm and slammed his fist between his eyes reflected in the mirror. Glass shattered, showered the floor and he shook a towel from the pile of dirty clothes. Wrapping it around his fist, he turned and left the room.

isolation

JANE BARDEN



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PATTERNS **3**RD Place ART

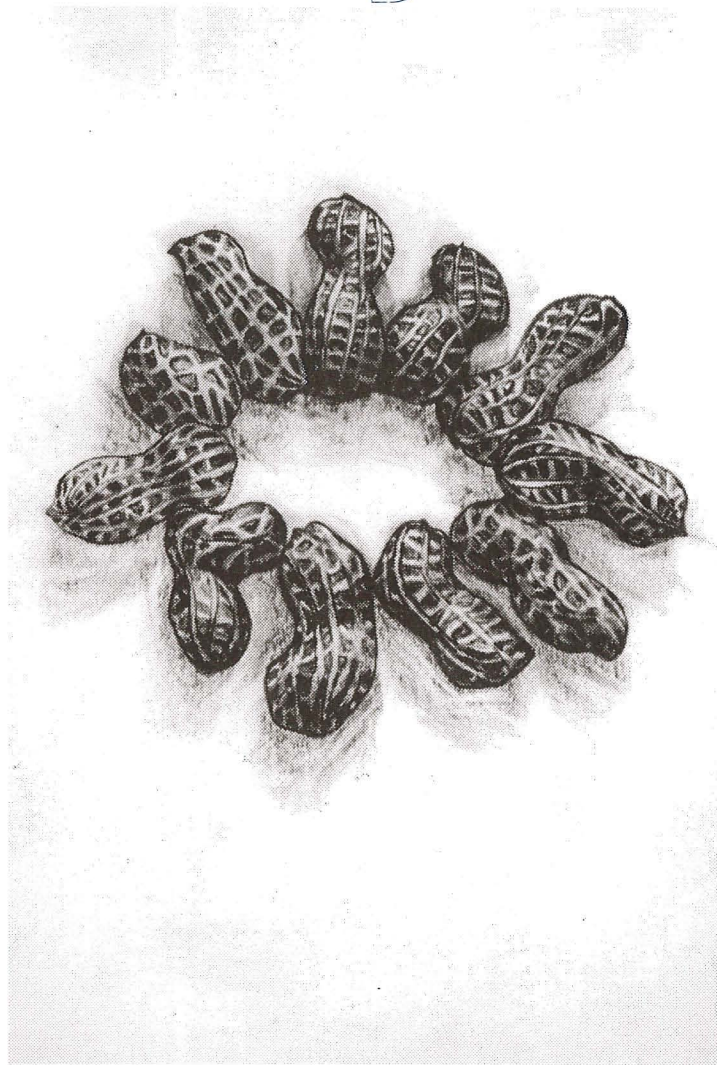


community

JANE BARDEN

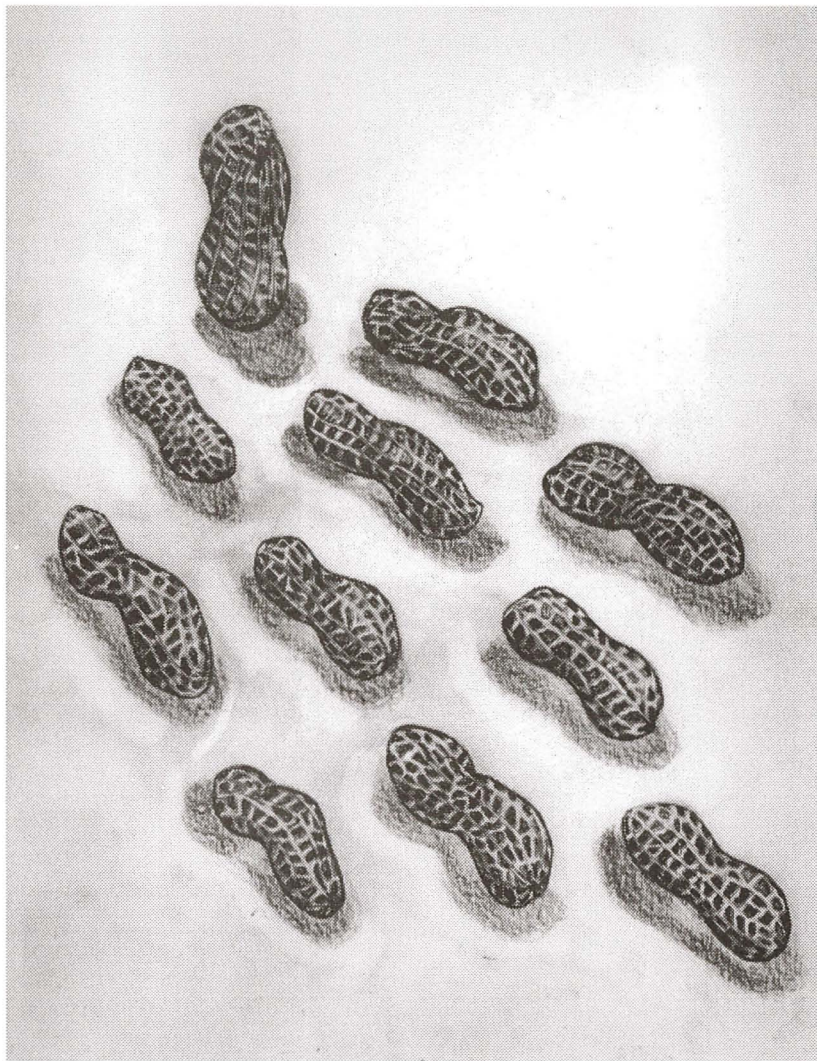
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PATTERNS **3**RD Place ART



domination

JANE BARDEN



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PATTERNS 3RD Place ART

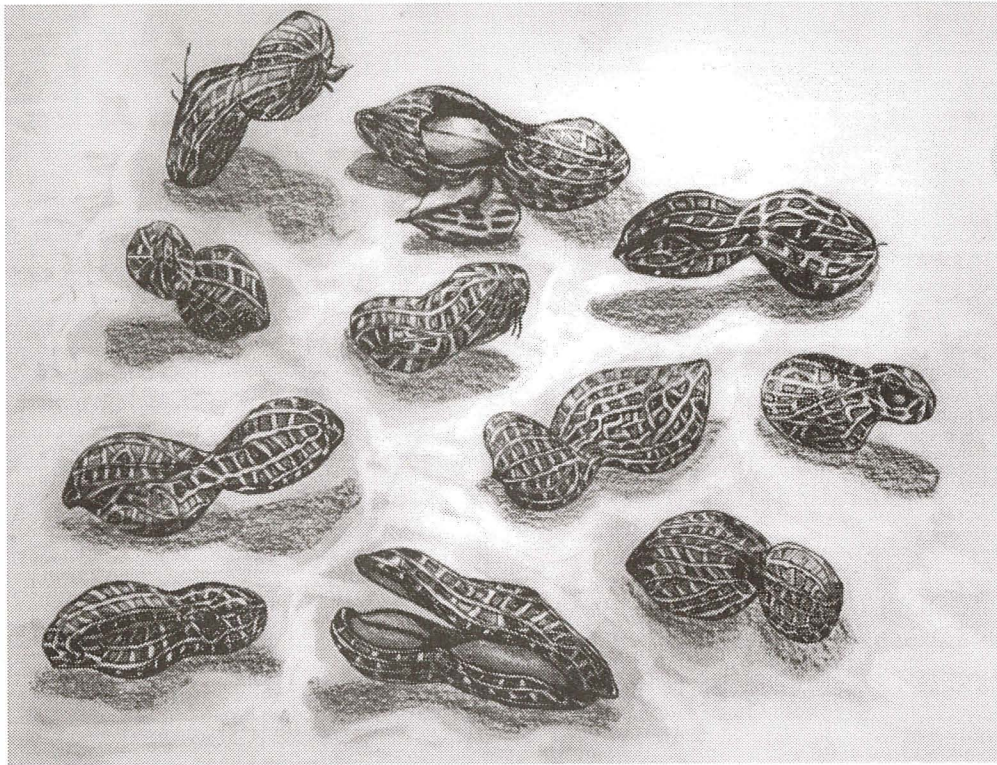


anxiety

JANE BARDEN

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PATTERNS **3**RD Place ART



squirrelaphobia

ANGELA TAYLOR

Everyone is afraid of something: it's just human nature. Some have rational fears like my mother. She is afraid of water deeper than the bathtub. Needless to say, I didn't get to the beach much as a child. Some have fears that are rational, but avoidable. My dad is terrified of flying and horses. He is content to travel long distances by car and stay away from all riding stables and farms. My brother's fear is a less rational and completely unavoidable. He is afraid of his wife. My fear is the most irrational and unavoidable of them all. As ridiculous as it sounds, I am afraid of squirrels.

I didn't just wake up one morning afraid of Bullwinkle's best friend. It all happened one beautiful summer day at the Detroit Zoo. My mom, Aunt Alaine, Uncle Jeff, brother and I all loaded into Uncle Jeff's little red Mustang hatchback for a day of wholesome family fun. The adults decided the zoo was a worthy outing for my 14 year old brother John and me. I had never been to a zoo, so I was thrilled at the possibility of seeing real wild animals. We grabbed a map and let the animal tracks painted on the hot concrete path lead us all over the zoo. The elephants were much larger than I imagined, but the smell of the elephant house

was disgusting. Most of the colossal creatures had moved inside to escape the afternoon heat. There is nothing quite like the overwhelming ammonia smell of several gallons of elephant urine for testing the human gag reflex. John turned green and wavered unsteadily in his Chuck Taylor's. We left before he had to be shoved off the floor. After some fresh air, we went on to view the flamingoes, the monkeys, and the clever antics of the polar bears. The furry white clowns of the arctic were a huge hit with the crowd because one would cover the end of the water supply pipe in their artificial ocean with his enormous paw, spraying cold water on anyone within a fifteen foot radius of the habitat. Heck, even the cute little squirrels scampering along the path were entertaining.

The early afternoon sun intensified the heat and humidity, creating a realistic jungle experience. After their midday snack, the animals retreated into shady corners. The lions disappeared into cave fronts crafted of stucco and the beavers into their pseudo-dam. All the creatures were lazy from lunch and the eighty five degree temperature. We, too, decided to lay low and wait out the hottest part of the day in the shade.

The duck pond was not the most popular exhibit at the zoo, but it was the best equipped as far as we were concerned that day. The exhibit was dotted with mature willow and oak trees and surrounded by a cement retaining wall. The wall was low and wide on the outside, just perfect for sitting on. We could watch the domestic ducks paddle around on the green-brown water while we cooled off with Coca Colas in sixteen ounce glass bottles. Some of the other zoo visitors fed pellets dispensed from vending machines to the hungry mallards and geese. Occasionally, an overgrown goldfish would surface to snatch a stray duck pellet or water bug. The image of the life milling around on the pond was as subtle and serene as anything Monet ever painted.

I watched the quiet activity of the pond from what I thought was a prime spot on the wall, enveloped in the shade of a majestic oak. My family sat a little further down. Aunt Alaine and Uncle Jeff fed popcorn from a red and white cardboard box to the squirrels and little finches hopping around on the sidewalk. Mom was preoccupied with lighting a much needed cigarette. John had plugged a dime into one of the vending machines nearby, so he had a handful of Duck Chow to amuse himself with. I watched him lean from his seat on

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PATTERNS 1st Place SHORT STORY

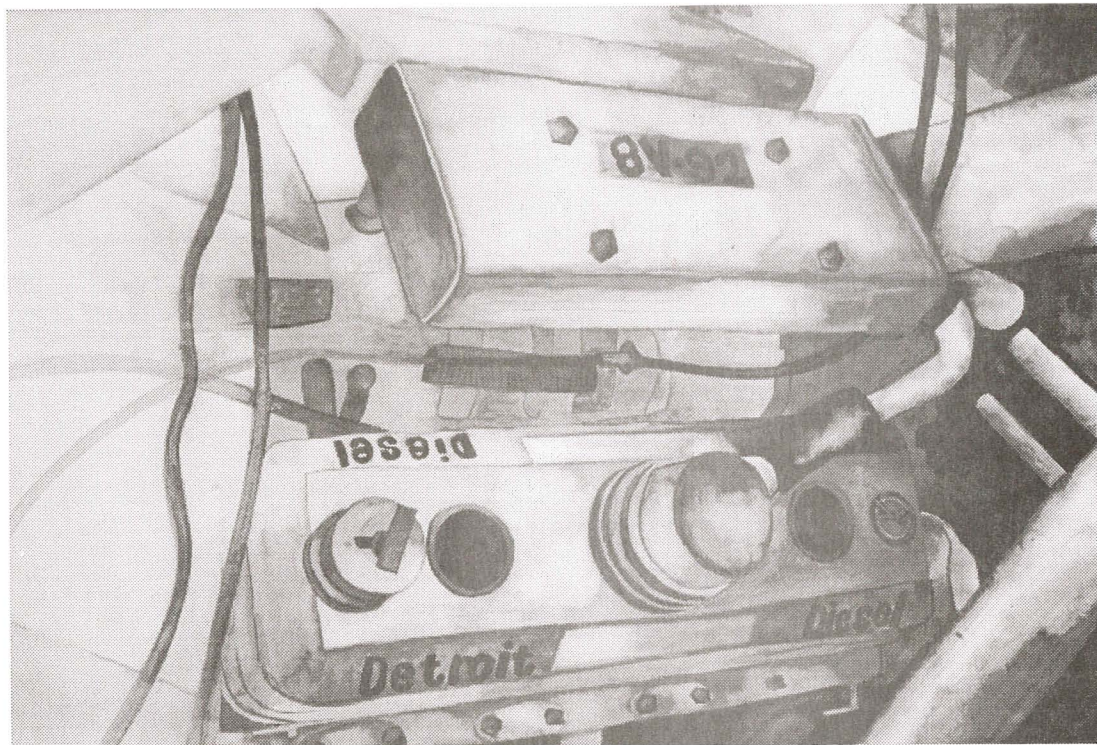
the wall, into the exhibit to coax a few of the tame ducks closer. He was trying to get a mallard to eat from his hand when the swan took interest. Unfortunately for my brother, the swan wasn't hungry for the dry brown snack he offered in the palm of his hand. The black-billed villain snatched a chunk of John's shoulder length hair and ran. A surprised "Hey" was all he could squawk as what some consider the epitome of avarian grace dragged him along the exhibit wall. Who knew swans could be so aggressive? As my brother's short-lived captivity gained the attention of everyone nearby, something strange happened. I felt the light touch of very tiny hands on my back. Small claws pierced my thin cotton shirt as I felt a slight tug of extra weight from behind. When I turned to investigate, I found myself staring directly into a petite brown face. A squirrel, frightened by the hullabaloo of John and the swan, decided to escape to the safety of the oak tree. In his haste, he never noticed I was in his way. He deftly scaled my back and when he got to my shoulder, I let out a shriek. It was so piercing I think time actually stopped for a minute. The squirrel, nearly as frantic as myself, made a horizontal leap from my shoulder to the trunk of the oak tree a few feet away. Of course, when everyone turned from John, now free from the clutch of angry swan, all they saw was a panicky seven year old girl pointing at a tree. It seems a little anticlimactic, but it is amazing how one small event, a few brief seconds, can change a young girl's perspective for a lifetime. From that day on, I have been terrified of squirrels.

There weren't many trees in my neighborhood, so my fear of squirrels stayed a secret for more than a decade. When I began college, one of the first things I noticed about the campus were the beautiful trees covered in fall's glory, some more than three stories high. I liked how the students played Frisbee and hackysack on the lawn between classes. When the weather was fair, the benches and steps were full of college kids studying, smoking, and most importantly, snacking. What is it about the post high school population that makes them want to share their Doritos and Cheetos with vermin? The furry little scavengers were everywhere. They would wander close enough to seated students to crawl into backpacks searching for food. As the semester progressed and winter drew near, the squirrels eventually grew bold enough to snatch potato chips out of unsuspecting people's hands. Walking across campus became a lesson in forbearance with the squirrels criss-crossing my path, sometimes refusing to scamper along their merry way in hopes that I might drop something to eat. Once, I went to throw some paper away in one of the covered garbage cans in the middle of campus. As I put my hand near the metal mouth of the trash receptacle, a black squirrel scampered out and shot me an evil look. Apparently, I had interrupted his midmorning meal. I cursed the squirrels and all those who encouraged their bad habits. To me, they transformed from furry charmers to rats with cuter tails. Luckily, college doesn't last forever. I grew up, got married and bought my first home. The neighborhood

where I live is lined with mature trees of almost every kind. Without exaggeration, I can say there are hundreds of trees on every block. Of course, with the trees come their inhabitants. Occasionally, I am greeted with the knocking of a red headed woodpecker or the sight of a cardinal and his mate. Blue Jays, finches, and robins all call my yard their home. Every fall the little chipmunks fill the hole in my front porch with acorns and tulip bulbs. Over the years, the squirrels have slowly won me over. From my bed, I can see them perform amazing feats of acrobatics as they leap from the oak to the silver maple outside my window. They used to entertain my dog, a blue tick coonhound, for hours. The squirrels would run, delicately balanced, along the top of the stockade privacy fence around our backyard with Truman snapping at their boney little heels. She would "tree" them, as her instinct and breed dictated, and bay for me to come see her catch. Our cat enjoys spending leisurely afternoons perched in a west window where she can "talk" to the squirrels stealing food from the birdfeeder. I have made peace with the black, brown, and gray squirrels in my neighborhood. Of course, everything could change if one tries scamper up my back.

detroit muscle

ALEXANDER FURCHAK



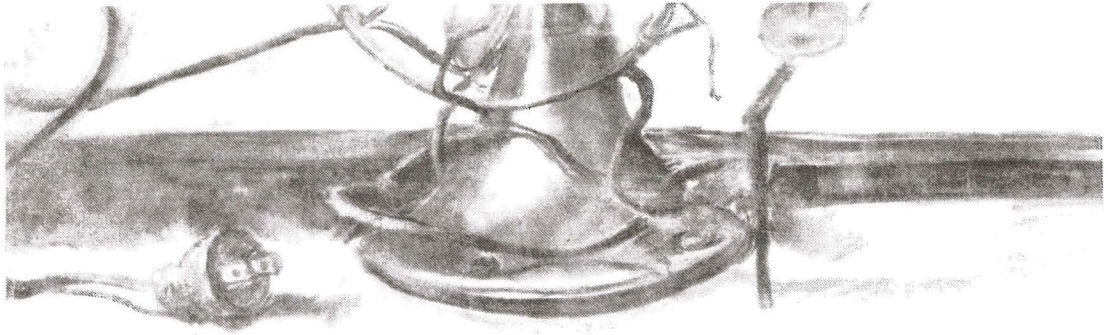
15

PATTERNS **2**ND PLACE ART



fan reflection

MARY PERRIN



16

PATTERNS **1**ST PLACE ART



the farmer's wife

CHRISTINE RYAN SASS

Ella O'Brien maneuvered the rickety John Deere around the ruts in the lane leading up to the barn. It was a dreary, overcast day, dark clouds heavy with the coming of winter. Exhausted from a day of planting wheat in the back forty acres, Ella still managed to sit erect on the cold cast iron seat as she made her way along the fields. Corn shocks stood like sentries along the fencerow, ready to be fed to the hungry cattle.

The jostling of the tractor lulled Ella into a reverie, thinking of the letter she received earlier in the week from her eldest child, Vincent. Not having a telephone, Ella relished his weekly correspondence. He wrote about his new job at Ford Motor Company in Detroit and how he was starting to get used to city living. Vincent admitted he still got a bit homesick at times, which secretly pleased Ella. She had missed him dearly since he had moved out of the house, in spite of the chaos of having seven other children at home. The money Vincent sent every month was a godsend. Ella eagerly awaited his homecoming tonight. He would stay the weekend to help his father and brothers finish the planting.

Bitter October winds whipped around Ella as she pulled the faithful old tractor into the weathered barn. 'Lord, these out buildings could really use a good coat of paint. Got no time to think of that now,' she mused, adding the task to an already endless list as she turned the key to the off position. Wearily, Ella climbed down from the tractor and started to the house. 'I'm late getting supper on the table,' she fretted, hoping Vincent would be home in time eat with the family.

Ella's husband, Daniel, and sons, Gerald and Joseph, would be ravenous when they came in from the fields. "I swear, those boys could eat a side of beef each," she muttered.

Noting a loose hinge, Ella opened the barnyard gate and trudged up the path leading to the house. Leaning heavily on the railing, she tiredly climbed the porch steps. Thinking she should send one of the girls out to the chicken coop to fetch some eggs for breakfast the next morning, she glanced up to see her old friend and neighbor, Hank Foley, pull his battered old pickup into the drive.

Ella drew her tattered corduroy jacket tighter around her shoulders against the chill of the early evening as she waited for Hank to get out

of his truck. 'That man is taking forever; I have things to do!' she grouched impatiently. Hank slowly made his way across the front yard, shuffling to meet her at the bottom of the steps. Ella smiled a greeting, which softened her weatherworn face.

"Just got a phone call," Hank stammered. Ella's heart raced at the anguished look on his face. "Grace Hospital in Detroit called. Vincent has been in a car accident. It's bad. They need you to come right away." Hank pulled a slip of paper out of his pocket where he had scrawled directions to the hospital. "I'll drive you there."

Hank stood helpless as Ella whirled around almost tripping to run back through the gate and across the barnyard, scattering hens and chickens as she flew. Her faded housedress flapped wildly around her legs as she raced past the granary on her way back to the fields to break the news to Daniel. "Oh Dear God, please save my Vincent," she whispered as she blindly ran along the furrowed path. Ella stopped in her tracks when she spied Daniel and the boys bringing the other tractor and plow in from the far fields on the north side of the farm. "Come on in quick. Something terrible. It's Vincent," she panted. As the impact of her words reached him, Daniel started

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PATTERNS 2ND PLACE SHORT STORY

to run through the stubby, brown-stalked cornfield, followed closely by the boys.

When he reached his wife, Daniel grabbed her arms and said "Ella, what's all the fuss?"

"Vincent has been in a car accident," Ella whispered as she pulled Hank's crumpled bit of paper from her pocket and handed it to her husband. "Hank is waiting up at the house. He will drive you to the hospital. I'll stay with the girls."

They raced back toward to the house where Hank stood ready at the pickup's open door. Daniel leaped into the old jalopy and was followed closely by Gerald.

"You stay home with Ma, you hear me!" Pa hollered.

"No, Pa, I'm going with you," Gerald replied as he climbed in the cab beside his father. Ella was weak with fear, as they pulled out of the driveway and disappeared down the road into the night.

Darkness was now complete as time crawled, almost at a standstill. Ella paced, going from the living room into the kitchen over that familiar creak in the floor and back again, afraid to look out the window onto the road. She lit her holy candle and as she paced said her rosary, praying God would spare Vincent. Wind rattled the old storm windows. Ella's daughters huddled together on the couch, eyes wide with fear, faces pale as they watched their mother keep vigil.

As the night crept on, Ella thought the ticking of the wall clock would drive her mad. She alternated her pacing with kneeling in prayer, drawing on years of unwavering faith.

In spite of the hot flush of anxiety that coursed through her body, Ella could feel night's chill coming over the old house. She made her way to the basement and shoveled more coal into the furnace. As she stoked the fire, Ella heard the kitchen door slam. She took the stairs two at a time calling, "Daniel, is that you?" Not getting an answer, she raced out the kitchen door onto the porch. Peering into the darkness, she could barely make out the shape of Joseph hightailing it to the barn.

As she watched Joseph turn the light on and disappear inside, she felt a tug on her dress. Her youngest, Elizabeth, asked sleepily, "Is Papa home yet? Did he bring Vincent?" Ella willed the rising panic inside her to subside. She took Elizabeth by the hand and said "Child, it's freezing out here. Let's get back inside. Pa will be home soon." Ella walked Elizabeth into the house and tucked her in her bed upstairs.

On her way into the living room to cover the girls with a quilt, a flicker of light from the window caught her eye. Car lights. Could it be them? She stood frozen, the pulsating in her ears drowning out the relentless ticking of the clock.

Willing her feet to move, Ella went to the kitchen door and out onto the porch with just her thin sweater as protection against the stabbing cold. Gripping the wooden railing, she made her way down the steps not taking her eyes off the pickup as it slowly made its way up the driveway. Daniel got out first. He stood looking at his wife, shaking his head, his broad shoulders sagging. Gerald stood behind his father, one hand on the pick up door for support.

"He's gone," Daniel stated flatly.

"What are you saying?" Ella panicked, her breath coming in short, shallow gulps.

"They could not save him, Ella," Daniel replied.

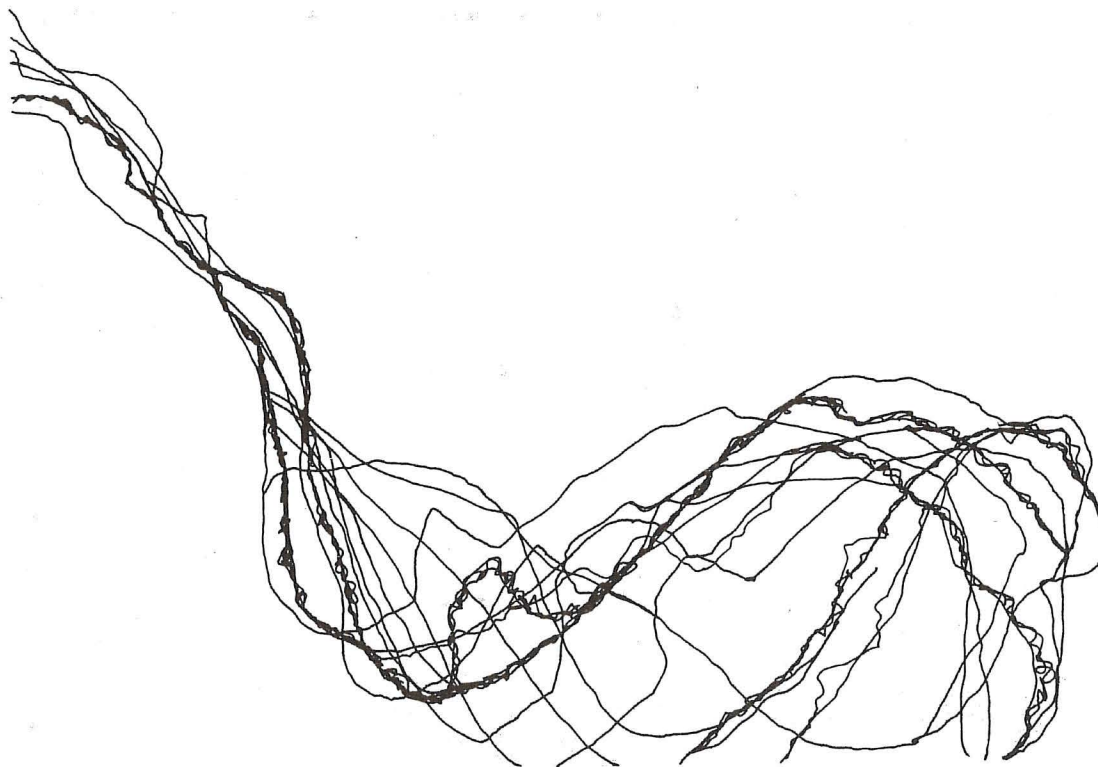
Ella felt as though she had been struck. "Take me to him," she demanded. With bowed head, Daniel turned away and slowly climbed the porch steps, screen door slamming behind him as he disappeared into the house. "Daniel, take me to my boy!" Her pleas echoed in the darkness.

Ella blindly made her way across the side yard that led to the apple orchard. A sleety rain had begun and gusting winds whipped her hair, the locks sticking to her tear soaked face. She trampled fallen fruit that lay rotting beneath naked limbs of the old fruit trees. Ella clung to a powerful branch, keening into the starless night.

After what seemed like an eternity, Ella collapsed to the ground raising her face to the heavens as she railed, "Lord, I trusted you! How could you betray me?" Through her anguished tears, she saw Joseph illuminated by the yellow barn light, watching her. His image blurred as the early winter storm unleashed its fury on the night.

insecure

EMILIE DOWNS



19

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

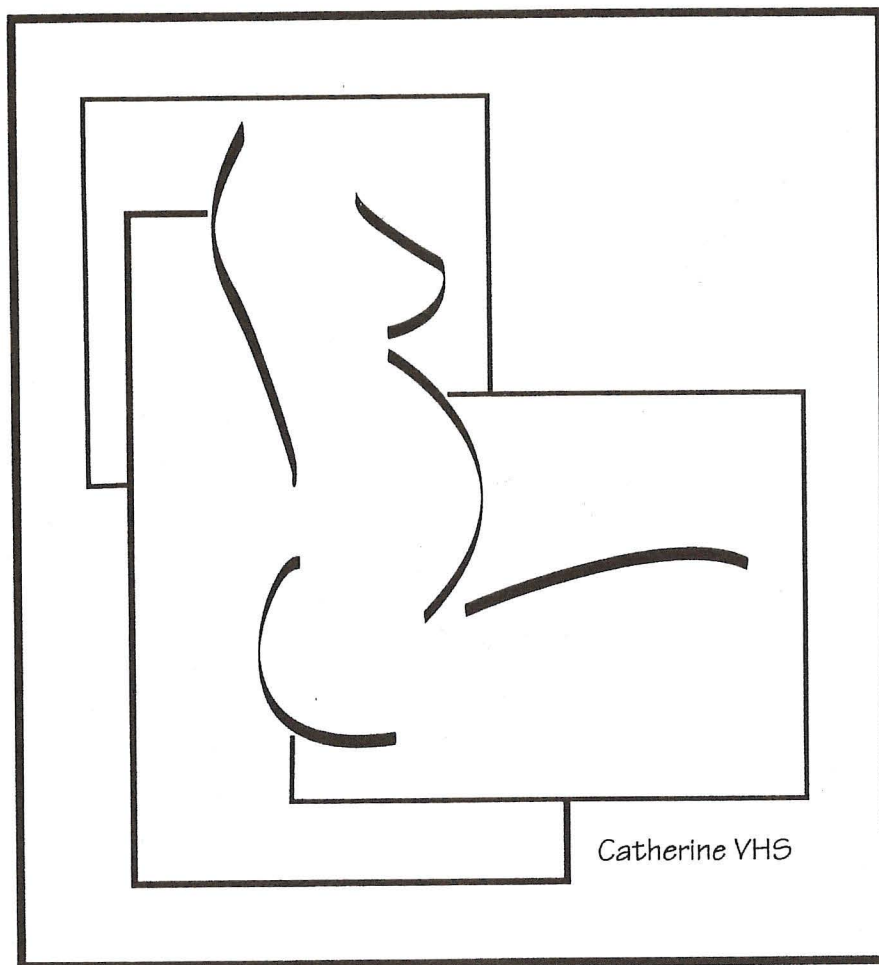


almost two

CATHERINE STEINBORN

20

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



room 506

KARI HORTOS

Her eyes caught the last streaks of coral sunlight through the window on the hospital's fifth floor. Pediatrics. Dr. Cassie Blake inhaled deeply and noted the mixed odor of rubbing alcohol and powder-scented diapers.

"Doctor Blake." Cassie closed her eyes as she slowly exhaled.

"Doctor Blake," repeated the head nurse sitting in front of the patient care computer at the desk. "You have one more admission this evening."

Cassie pulled her eyes away from the window.

"I'm sorry, Ruth, I was gone for a minute there," Cassie smiled sheepishly and shrugged as she picked up the admission paperwork the head nurse laid on the counter next to her.

Dr. Blake, a first year resident, flipped through the standard hospital forms and began to read.

Patient: Three-week-old female infant from Warren Village.

Primary Diagnosis: Pneumonia, Anencephaly, Cleft palate, multiple organ malformations.

Prognosis: Terminal.

Treatment: Comfort care.

She sighed then pulled her stethoscope from her lab coat pocket, collected a tongue

depressor, gloves and a pen light from the medical supply room. She stopped for a moment to mentally brace herself before she entered room 506.

Only the silhouette of the trees could be discerned from the deep purple backdrop of the sky through the window in room 506, a moonless, cold night. Her eyes traveled to the institutional crib with its hard, shiny stainless steel slats and mattress covered with a crisp clean sheet stamped with the hospital's name. In the center of the crib lay the very small infant. Cassie shifted uneasily. She started to turn away from the crib when she heard rapid erratic breaths and rattles from beneath the white receiving blanket—she returned to her duty.

Cassie pulled back the corner of the blanket and began the examination. The infant's head was the size of a misshapen tennis ball; there was no forehead and the eyes were bulging, frog-like with heavy lids. The infant's nose and mouth merged together into a darkened gash in the center of her face. *Grade IV Cleft lip and palate—the worst.* Her hands were angled inward from the wrists; fingers rubbery, overlapping like a carelessly bundled collection of sticks. As Cassie began to listen to the heart and lungs, the infant struggled a little, recoiling from the

cold metal of the stethoscope as it touched the skin over her chest and abdomen.

Little squeaks from Ruth's clinical shoes announced her presence as she entered room 506. "The parents are here and want to talk to you."

Cassie looked up with surprise, "Parents. Really?" Most of the children cared for at Warren Village were wards of the state with all decisions provided for them by court assigned guardians. She finished her examination and carefully wrapped the infant back into the blanket.

Ruth pointed toward the family waiting room, "The parents are in there." Cassie entered the room and walked over to the only two people in the room seated next to each other on the worn blue Naugahyde couch. They wore matching yellow and orange uniform shirts with the McDonald's logo on the sleeves.

"Are you our baby's doctor?" As the father's words tumbled out his hands involuntarily waved in the air. Cassie glanced at the mother, who shyly tucked her face down and hid behind the father's shoulder. Both were in their twenties and both had some form of physical and mental impairments. Cassie looked beyond them for a moment, her throat ached with sadness—she

studied how the window framed the night sky: black, severe, without stars.

Noticing Dr. Blake's hesitation he began nodding his head furiously, "Mandy's nurse Anna at Warren Village told us Mandy was sick...real sick this time and she is going to die," his torso and arms jerked and writhed as he became more agitated. "We know she is very sick Doctor, we want to be with her." Embarrassed, he hugged his arms tightly to his chest to stop the motion.

Cassie pulled one of the chairs over and sat facing the young parents.

Help me to find the words, she pleaded.

She began, "Mandy has a very serious infection in her chest making it hard for her to breathe," she continued, "The medicine is not strong enough to help and Mandy is going to die." The mother buried her face into the sleeve of the father then slowly turned her face toward Cassie. She nodded her understanding then sadly reached over to hold Cassie's hand. Cassie looked down at the red chapped hands grasping her own. She felt stinging tears start to push at the lids of her eyes.

Cassie looked back to the window and tried to focus on her breath.

"We want to be with Mandy, we will be very quiet and will follow all of the rules," he said.

Cassie heard the father's request – she stared far past the frame of the window to the blurred grays of the night. Then, her eyes met the gaze of the head nurse, Ruth, who had observed the entire exchange from her post at the doorway. Ruth shrugged and made a little 'let's give it a try' look.

Ruth and Cassie led Mandy's parents to room 506. As they stood next to the crib, Ruth released the latch and lowered the side so they could touch Mandy. Cassie found an extra chair in the next room and carried it in so both parents could sit. The mother gently reached in, encircled Mandy with her arms and rested her cheek on the sheet next to her baby. The small struggling breaths seemed to ease.

The father stood close by, holding tightly to the crib rails, "Thank you, Doctor."

Cassie touched his arm then quietly left the room. As she finished the admission paperwork she looked to the window in 506. The hush of the room wove together with stillness of the night outside and was held in place by the stars.

holiday pine

JULIA PITLOSH



23

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

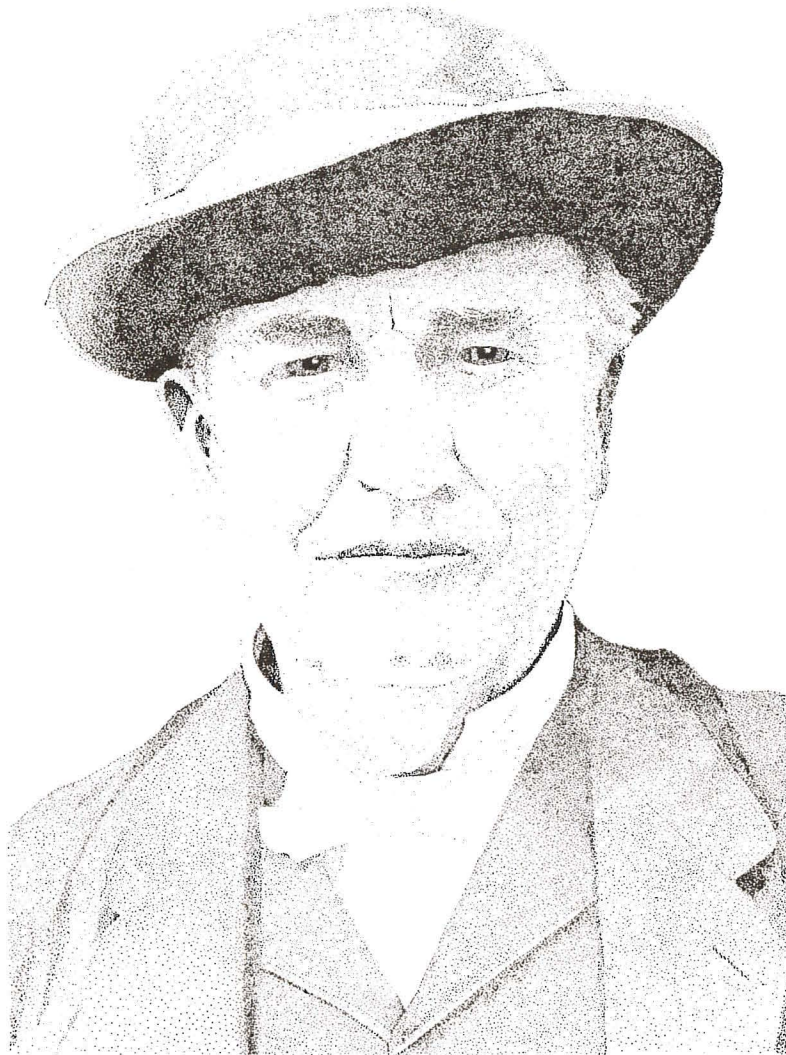


thomas edison

PATRICIA GRIFFIN

24

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



girls' night out

CHRISTINE RYAN SASS

Mae rocked impatiently on the front porch swing, keeping a watchful eye on the road to the east. It was a balmy summer evening and a gentle breeze rustled the leaves of the mighty oak tree at the end of the sidewalk in the front yard.

After a time, Mae saw the little red car turn off the highway onto her gravel road. Irene was behind the wheel tonight careening up Brandon Road, dust billowing like a cloud surrounding the car. Irene was the best driver of the group, and that's not saying much. She has a lead foot and once got stopped by a state trooper for going 75 mph on M-21! The old gal talked her way out of a ticket by playing the "sweet old granny" routine.

It was Nellie's turn to plan their adventure this week. The group had been doing these weekly outings for as long as any of them could remember. Mae wondered if tonight it would be the picture show in the big town, or maybe a drive up to the lake for some ice cream.

Hurrying inside the house, Mae grabbed her little black hat with the feather on the side and positioned it just so on her curly blue-tinted hair. She stuck the pearl-tipped hatpin securely in the front. She didn't want her

favorite hat to go flying off her head and out the window when Irene really got the car cranked up.

Mae grabbed her pocket book and smoothed the folds of her black and white print dress. One last look in the mirror and she was out the front door, careful not to let the screen door slam.

Irene roared into the driveway, tires pelting stones like tiny projectiles. She screeched to a halt with Nellie beside her in the passenger seat, her head thrown back with laughter.

Mae trotted down the front steps lightly holding onto the iron railing. Marguerite and Kate scrunched over in the back seat so she could squeeze in.

As Irene backed the car onto the road and threw it into first gear she said, "I know we're a bit late, Mae, but Nellie wasn't ready when we got to her house."

"Well, that's nothing new, and besides, it's only a couple of minutes past six," replied Mae.

Irene sped back up the road to the stop sign at the corner of Brandon Road and M-19.

"Where to, Nellie?" Irene queried with her foot expectantly on the brake.

"The bingo in Sarnia!" Nellie announced.

"Why, we haven't been there in quite a while," Kate remarked.

Irene took her foot off the brake and gunned the gas, screeching across the intersection.

"For heaven's sake, Irene, you didn't even look for traffic when you took off!" Marguerite exclaimed in her thick Irish brogue.

"Oh, I did so," Irene grumbled. "Don't be such a worry wart."

The ladies stopped their bickering long enough to bless themselves as they passed Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church on their way out of town.

"Father gave a lovely sermon on Sunday, didn't he?" Marguerite remarked.

"He certainly did, but more importantly he got done with Mass in less than an hour for a change," Irene replied.

"Irene, that's scandalous!" said a shocked Marguerite.

Mae watched out the car window as cornfields, serene scenes of grazing cows and horses, and farmers working their fields, whizzed by. Suddenly, Irene rounded a curve in the road, seemingly on two wheels.

"Irene, slow down. Remember that ticket you got on this very road," scolded Kate.

"Oh, pipe down Kate, I'm only going 65."

"She's right, Irene. If you had to stop fast, you might lose control of the car," offered Marguerite in Kate's defense.

"You two fuss-budgets! Why do you even bother to come along?" cried Irene as she swerved around a squirrel that foolishly tried to make its way across the road.

"Now Irene, Kate's right. We do want to get there in one piece," Mae said. In an effort to steer the conversation in a more pleasant direction, she asked, "So, if one of us wins the big prize money tonight, what will we do with it?"

Kate spoke first. "I know what I'd do. I'd have old Roger Malloy come over and fix my porch steps. They are a bit run-down. It would spruce the place up."

Nellie went next. "I'd buy that red hat I saw in Winkleman's store window. It would look pretty snazzy with my red dress. Speaking of that dress, I wonder where I put it. I haven't come across it in a while." She now looked a tad worried.

"Nellie, you probably put it way to the back of your hall closet," Mae said reassuringly. "Now, as for me, I'd buy myself some new baking pans I saw in Kresge's. Mine are pretty worn out." She was actually thinking she would buy her granddaughter, Carol, the pair of shoes she had been mooning about at Sperry's Department Store. Mae didn't mention this to the group; they all thought she spoiled that girl far too much. "Marguerite, what would you do if you won the jackpot?"

"Well, I think I'd put it in the bank. You just never know when an emergency will come up. I'm a firm believer in having a little nest egg. I lived through the Great Depression, you know."

Irene snorted, "Well, didn't we all, Marguerite!"

"How about you, Irene, what would you do?" Gram asked, thinking this ought to be good.

"I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd buy that neighbor of mine a leash for his dog. I'm sick and tired of that mongrel coming into my yard and doing his business. I've a mind to go ahead and buy him one anyway, even if I don't win. Talking to that old coot next door about it hasn't done any good."

The chatter continued for about another ten miles or so when they finally reached Port Huron and the Blue Water Bridge.

Kate handed Irene money for bridge fare. Irene guided the car away from the tollbooth and proceeded up the incline of the bridge. As she reached the mid-point, she gave the car some gas that sent it bounding up and over the peak of the span and accelerating down the other side.

"Oh for the love of God, Irene, be careful," moaned Marguerite, her hands gripping Mae's arm on one side and Kate's on the other. "I've heard tell cars have almost flown right over the side of this bridge because they were going too fast." Marguerite looked as though she might be sick.

Mae squeezed Marguerite's hand reassuringly. "We'll be across the bridge in no time flat. Just keep your eyes straight ahead and hold onto my hand."

Mae took a minute to drink in the spectacular view. She always loved crossing this amazing expanse of steel. It was probably her favorite part of their outings to Canada. She watched as a freighter glided out onto Lake Huron. The sky was a perfect summer blue with a few cottony clouds.

What a sense of freedom it gave Mae, being so far above land and water. She felt she could almost sprout wings and fly (better not mention this to Marguerite, she thought). Mae conjured up a picture in her mind of herself balancing on one of the steel beams and suddenly sprouting wings and taking flight. Picturing Marguerite's crazed reaction made her smile.

The dazzling blue of the river reminded Mae of a travelogue she had watched on television. The man said the water of the St. Clair River was the bluest he'd ever seen, and he'd been all around the world. He'd even seen the Blue Danube! Mae didn't know about the blue part but did agree it was one of the most beautiful sites she had ever seen.

They finally made it across the bridge. Mae felt Marguerite relax her grip.

The customs agent recognized this merry band of women from their many trips across the river in search of the big money. He smiled and waved them on through.

"Oh, Irene, it was that same handsome fellow in the toll both tonight. We haven't seen him there in a while," Nellie gushed.

"Nell, what would Joe say if he heard you carrying on about the bridge man?" scolded Kate. Nellie did not reply, but shot another sidelong glance in his direction as they pulled away.

As Irene made the turn onto Front Street, the girls eagerly watched for the bingo hall. Irene had slowed down to an acceptable speed once she had crossed the bridge into Canada. It was a foreign country, after all, and a body did not want to get in trouble with the law over here. No telling what would become of a person!

Irene pulled her car into the crowded parking lot. They had only a couple of minutes to spare, and there were only a few parking spots left. She deftly squeezed the little car into a space between two larger vehicles and turned off the engine. As the girls gathered up their purses, Kate said, "Irene, we can't get out on our side, you're parked too close to this other car."

Irene replied, "Just suck it in a bit Kate, old girl, and get out of the car. We've got bingo money to win. And Kate, don't put a dent in my car door."

The ladies entered the buzzing bingo hall and went to the table to pay. Irene bought ten bingo cards; she always got the most cards of the group. The rest of the girls bought four to six each. When it came Nellie's turn to pay, she rifled through her purse looking for her money.

"I know I stuffed a ten dollar bill in here before I left the house," Nellie cried. She dumped the entire contents of her purse onto

the money-taker's table, much to their dismay. Nellie was such a packrat. It took a few minutes for her to sort through the contents, but the money was not to be found.

Irene said, "Oh for heaven's sake, Nellie, I'll pay for you. You can pay me back later."

Present crisis averted, Mae could feel the excitement in the air as Nellie whispered, "Mae, I'm feeling lucky tonight. This could be my night to finally win the jackpot."

Mae laughingly replied, "Nell, you say that every time and you never do win! It's because you don't pay attention to your cards. You are too busy people-watching. It's hard for me to watch my cards and yours at the same time."

Irene rushed to grab a table that had five seats together. Mae recognized several "regulars" at various tables and smiled and nodded to them as she passed. Irene, Mae, and Nellie took seats on one side of the table and Marguerite and Kate sat across from them.

Marguerite asked, "Should we get some snacks before they get started?" Everyone thought that was a great idea. Mae went with her to help bring back enough root beers and peanuts for the group.

Irene lit a cigarette. From across the table Kate inquired, "Are you intending to smoke that thing?"

Irene snotted, "No, Kate, I'm just going to sit here and watch it till it burns out."

"Well Irene, you don't have to be such a pill about it. Your smoke will blow right across the table and into my face. You know it's not healthy

to breathe in all that cigarette smoke," Kate sniffed, feeling quite righteous.

Irene continued with her mini-tirade. "Kate, are you going to ask everyone else in this place to put theirs out too?"

Mae came back to the table just in time to catch the tail end of this exchange and interjected, "Kate, switch places with me. The smoke won't bother me too much and I'll be better able to see the caller." Kate gave Irene a disapproving look as she gathered up her purse, bingo cards, and chips and traded places with Mae.

The announcer finally said, "Everyone get their cards ready. It's time to begin!"

As the night progressed, calls of "B-12" and "I-52" filled the room. The first game was a "Four Corners" and went fairly quickly. Soon, someone across the room yelled, "Bingo!"

"Rats," said Nellie dejectedly. "I almost had that one."

"I'm proud of you, Nell. You're keeping a pretty close eye on your cards tonight," complimented Mae.

Several more games passed and the girls were getting nervous. There was only one more game to be played and the night would be over. "My goodness, the evening has flown," thought Mae as she glanced at the clock on the wall.

More "N-14's" and "G-39's" were announced. Nellie grabbed Kate's sleeve and said excitedly, "Look, I've only got two more squares left and I'll have the cover-all!"

Irene said, "You've got to be kidding me."

Mae and Marguerite looked on in astonishment.

The announcer finally called "0-9" and Nellie shot up out of her seat, tipping over her chair and hitting the woman behind her. "Bingo, I've got the Bingo!" She hugged Marguerite and then did a little jig right in the middle of the aisle-way.

"Glory be to St. Patrick," Marguerite breathed, "Nellie finally won."

After much whooping and hollering, the girls gathered up their belongings. Nellie collected her jackpot money and the girls climbed into the car for the drive home.

As they neared the village limits, Irene made the turn down Cogley Road to drop off Kate. The next stop was Marguerite's on Main Street, then Nellie on Mary Street, and finally, Mae.

"It was great fun tonight, Irene," Mae said contentedly. "I'm tickled that Nellie finally won."

"Yes, it was a fun night, Mae, although Kate's whining gets to me, and Marguerite is so namby-pamby at times."

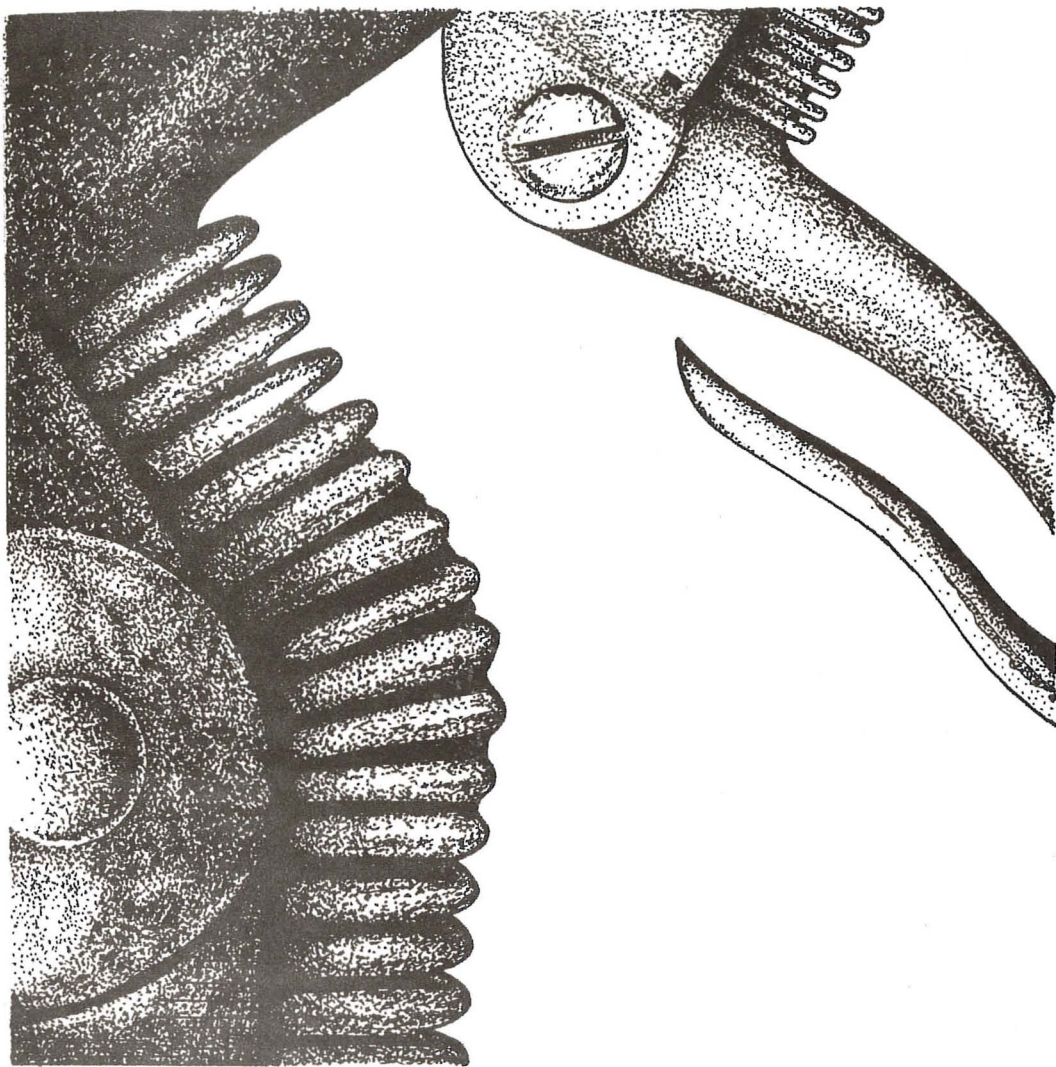
"Oh, I know they can be annoying sometimes, Irene, but they wouldn't be Kate and Marguerite if they were any different."

As they pulled into her driveway, Mae said "Say, I'll be putting up some strawberry jam in the morning. Would you like to come up for coffee and some homemade cinnamon rolls? You can lend me a hand."

"Sure, that sounds grand," responded Irene. "I'll be over first thing, right after I stop by Nellie's and pick up the money she owes me for bingo tonight."

tension

SCOTT HETHERINGTON



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PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

ELEANOR B. MATHEWS WRITING AWARD

*To be an artist includes much; one must possess many gifts...
which have been acquired by one's own effort.*
—Kate Chopin

One of Debbie's gifts is her will to take on any project she has set her mind to, whether it be restoring an old, beat-up piano and then learning how to play it or plucking a few words, hammering them together into a line, and making them sing.

Debbie has crafted two pieces in this issue of *Patterns*, and I know something about the work that went into her poem "Unequal Footing," having seen early drafts of it. Originally submitted under the title "Equal Footing," the first draft of the poem was interesting but contained slack in the lines, idle words, and a wobble indicating more work was needed. That's not to say it was not a poem; it had images and smart metaphors. However, the tune wasn't quite right. Here's a sampling from one of the first drafts:

They do not fit but are made to lie down
while they are held in place by nails and screws. Curling ends pop nails
and stubbornly refuse to
conform, to be nothing more than a floor for dirt to be left on.
In that part of each board, each board that was once more than it is now, is
a part that remains
untouched by those who would control it, a hardwood
core that cannot be manipulated. Untainted by stains and sealers, the
sticky life-blood
of that place within rises to the sun-warmed surface.

Note how much better the lines are: their compactness, vividness, and rhythm have all been improved and images of resistance are now in the foreground:

Misfit, they are held in place by nails and screws,
But curling ends pop nails and stubbornly refuse to conform;
a heartwood core cannot be manipulated.
Untainted by stains and sealers, the sticky life-blood within stirs,
secretly rising to the sun-warmed surface.

She trimmed a few misshapen planks, finally shaping the poem into five lines that fit together. What one appreciates is her dissatisfaction with her first effort, her desire to get it right, to revise, cut, rework, recast, and reassemble. The result is a better poem.

Eleanor Mathews' same commitment to craft and hard work, which many have commented on in past years, is shared by Deborah Biederwolf. Moreover, Ms. Mathews' legacy awards those who have the acumen and ability to see the world from other perspectives, to empathize with those who might be easily overlooked or condemned. The discipline and control to do so demands care, revision, re-thinking, and clarity of vision and expression. Her poem aspires to these ideals.

She works toward that same standard of accomplishment in her essay on the character Othello. Her disciplined, controlled argument advocates that we condemn the crime but not the man, that we abhor his flaw of jealousy but in Othello see (for he could not) its roots in his distorted vision of himself. Moreover, the same fervor she applied to writing poems she channeled into a surprisingly inventive and perspicacious defense of the Moor, transforming it into something more than mere academic discourse.

Debbie has worked hard to create these works. Her efforts as a critic and a creative writer have resulted in works seemingly written with relative ease (an illusion all writers seek) and a confidence that reveals the harmony of her gifts. She enjoys making language work, and these gifts link her work to those who have received this award in the past and those yet to have it bestowed on them.

Othello the Moor: an instrument of murder

DEBBIE BIEDERWOLF

In Shakespeare's tragic play, *Othello the Moor*, there is no question that it was Othello who murdered his wife, Desdemona. Indeed, he confessed immediately after the deed was done. We knew Othello as a good man, a worthy hero who loved Desdemona, yet we know it was with the same two hands he used for loving her that he put her to death. How does one reconcile this Othello we came to know as a great man, a man of high stature and principles, to this murderer, this man who was Othello yet was not Othello, the one who snuffed out the light of his life? How can we feel, or should we feel, compassion for this blackened soul, a fallen hero who killed the one who brought him so much joy? By definition, Othello the Moor is a murderer, but I ask that we consider another alternative, and as one who feels deep compassion for the Moor, I pray this will suffice as an explanation of sorts to make this double tragedy more bearable. I see Othello as less a murderer and more an instrument used for murder, wielded by Iago, who continually "poured pestilence" into Othello's ear and played upon his weaknesses and insecurities. I believe that Othello is as much a victim deserving of our pity and

grief as Desdemona, and we can openly grieve for what happened to him without wondering if we should.

As we try to make sense of this tragedy, we naturally begin to ask what kind of man Othello really was and how did this happen. Did he fool us all? Considering the opinions of his peers, we know he was an honorable man, referred to more than once as the "valiant Moor" (I, iii, 47). We like him immediately, and he has our admiration. Desdemona loved him because of his history: he moved her to tears. Despite the fact that he had lived through the worst conditions, barely escaping death, his heart was not hardened. No, to his own demise, he wore it on his sleeve.

This man with a heart was an open book, and therefore malleable, to someone like Iago. Iago, his trusted ensign, plots to seek his revenge early in the play and says, (of Othello):

He holds me well; The better shall my purpose work on him (I, iii, 381-382).

The Moor is of a free and open nature that thinks men honest who but seem to be so:

And will as tenderly be led by th' nose As asses are. (I, iii, 390-393)

Iago knew Othello, knew him better than Desdemona, and when he said he could lead him by the nose effortlessly, he was right. The fact that Othello "held him well" only made things easier. Othello's nature, his goodness, his open and free, trusting nature—usually good traits to have, made him vulnerable to outside influence, like a small cut on the skin, allowing the evil virus of Iago in.

Where Othello was weak, Iago struck, until Othello's thoughts were no longer his own, and the insidious cancer of mistaken jealousy had replaced good, sound judgment. But why did Othello trust what Iago told him? Othello, naively, (speaking of Iago and himself) explained it this way:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit
Of human dealings. (III, iii, 257-259)

Haply for I am black
And have not those soft parts of
conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone. (III, iii, 262-266)

This is the second, but most insightful, instance where Othello refers to his lack of social and communication skills, indicating that it was a source of insecurity in him. The first hint that he thought himself inadequate was in I, iii, 81-82 when he said of himself, "Rude

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am I in my speech, and little blessed with the soft phrase of peace..." Iago knew Othello was not socially adept or at home in Venetian society, and he used Othello's lack of knowledge and insecurities about it to arouse his suspicions in Desdemona even more. For example, Iago implies that Othello should:

look to his wife, [for] In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks they dare not show their husbands; their best conscience is not to leave't undone, but kept unknown. (III, iii, 202-205)

After he introduces the idea that Desdemona may be unfaithful, and Othello believes him because he is ignorant of Venetian society, Iago further distresses Othello by reminding him of what Brabantio said, that she deceived her own father in marrying him! The implication, of course, is that if she could deceive her own father, she could do the same with her husband and that she was not to be trusted! Othello's self-perceptions of inadequacy, manipulated and used against him as only Iago could, led to his destruction, and the murder of his beloved Desdemona. He trusted the wrong person, fatally so.

Throughout the play, Iago "poured pestilence into his (Othello's) ear" and Othello, because of his inexperience and insecurity, listened to the one he thought skilled in human nature. In pleading Othello's case, we would be negligent if we did not recognize the depth of Iago's evil and skill, because Othello was not the only one fooled by "honest Iago." Iago's false face was not seen by anyone until the end of the play, so Othello was in good company, and other characters were also unwitting participants in the death of

Desdemona. But in seeing the close, loving relationship Othello seemed to have with Desdemona, we must continue to ask: why did he listen to and trust Iago instead of Desdemona? This is where the crux of our dilemma lies and we have only small clues to the workings of Othello's mind. We know that Othello, in his "right" mind, would not murder without cause. He was a fair man who believed in justice. He loved Desdemona, his "soul's joy" (II, I, 182). The depth of Othello's happiness is evident when he is reunited with his bride in Cyprus, in Act II, Scene I, but there is the underlying sense that he feels his happiness and good fortune are too good to be true, hinting at even more insecurity about himself, and consequently his marriage. Desdemona chose him, yes, but he realizes she has chosen outside of her social class. Desdemona is beautiful, cultured, young, of noble background, and he, in contrast is unattractive (some say ugly), uncultured by Venetian standards, of alien background and black-skinned, and older than his bride! It is no wonder that he was somewhat unsure of himself in matters of the heart. This is new territory to him, and he finds himself lacking. He is faced with two options: trust Desdemona or trust "honest" Iago. To trust Desdemona would mean exposing his vulnerabilities: he already thought she probably would desire someone who was younger, more of her social class, and especially of her color—because that is what he thought—so how could he diminish himself even more by asking her for reassurance? As we saw, any reassurances she gave were cast

aside because Othello's own human characteristics and shortcomings, combined with Iago's accusations, would not let him believe in her. Sadly, but true, because of what was already in his mind, and his insecurities about himself, Othello was only too ready to believe the worst of his wife with the help of Iago's wicked insinuations and lies. Besides, his trusted ensign, compared to Desdemona, would not lie to him. Remember that Othello was more at home on the battlefield, where his ensign or other officer, of necessity, held the safety of the entire army in his hands. As a scout, the ensign would report back to the general (Othello in this case), and based on what the ensign reported, the army would retreat or advance, perhaps to their death. The ensign was in a position of determining the fate of the army; he was the trusted reporter with peripheral vision, he was the General's eyes. Othello was accustomed to trusting the report of his scout, which is the role Iago took on for his own purposes, and out of habit and history, and because he did not trust himself in dealing with emotional issues, he trusted Iago's reports concerning Desdemona. He had no such history with his wife. Indeed, her own father, in his own despair and bitterness, cautioned Othello about Desdemona this way, "Look to her, Moor, if thou has eyes to see" (I, iii, 288). The Moor, as we know, had poor eyesight. He saw Desdemona through Iago's eyes and his vision was clearly distorted.

Othello's eyes were opened too late, when he realized he had been deceived in the cruelest way by the one he had trusted over his wife, who now lies dead by his hands. The nature of his character—his personal insecurities—had allowed Iago's evil influence in; he trusted Iago because he did not trust himself. Yes, Othello, we will remember you and grieve for you, too, as a man with faults and human weaknesses, as "one that loved not wisely, but too well; of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought, perplexed in the extreme" (V, ii, 340-342).

The last act of *Othello the Moor* ends with three dead bodies on the bed—Desdemona, Emilia, and finally Othello, who had committed his final act of justice by killing himself. As the curtains are drawn around the bed of tragedy and the play ends, Lodovico confirms what we already know: Iago was the true murderer, Othello his instrument.

O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed.
This is thy work. (V, ii, 358-360)

lobaria oregana

LISA STURTRIDGE

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PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



first flight

SHEILA CERNY

The first thing that I had ever heard about Civil Air Patrol was that it was "a bunch of kids who go up flying, looking for crashed airplanes...and you can get called out in the middle of the night...and you can get called out of school..." Was I interested? Of course I was!

I had just turned fifteen when I joined CAP, ready and eager to be called upon to save the day from the seat of an airplane. What I discovered soon after joining was that the "kids" did not actually get to fly the planes; they did their share of the searching on the ground. Yet ground search had its own appeal, as did the many other facets of this complex organization; I knew I was hooked from day one.

Of course, there were moments when I had to remind myself why I had joined. One such time came at my newly formed squadron's first official activity. Our unit was helping another unit with their yearly fundraiser. This involved standing outside in the freezing cold from eight o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening, helping people who had paid for rides climb in and out of airplanes. As much as I tried to keep a positive attitude, I am sure that I was as green as my uniform with envy by the close of the day.

My squadron commander had flown down that day to assist with the flights for the public. Even among the many other Cessna 172s, I discovered that I could pick out the drone of his engine before the plane was close enough to be visually recognized. Every thirty minutes, like clockwork, I knew Major Juhl was back to swap out another load of gleeful children and airsick parents. Like clockwork, I trooped forward to usher out the old and again to usher in the new.

Only two other cadets from my squadron had come with me to this activity. That morning we had thought that those who had elected to stay home were the foolish ones, but as the day wore on we questioned whether we were the fools. By noon I was stomping my feet between assists and wiping my nose every few minutes. The passing of time was slow indeed as I waited for the day to end and Angie's father to pick us up.

The line finally started to dwindle as the sun was setting in the late afternoon. I was standing by the fence when I heard Major Juhl taxi his Cessna up behind me and cut the engine, but I was too cold and downtrodden to turn around. It wasn't until we heard his voice that the three of us turned to look at him.

He told us that he had been thinking about the fact that Angie's father could just as easily pick us up in Sandusky as he could in Port Huron, and it would help him out a lot if we would accompany him on the flight home. Suddenly the day was not so cold and we were not so tired. We were going to get to fly after all. Finally, the reason that we had joined CAP was coming at least partially true. Then he told us that we had to decide which of us was going to get to sit in the front seat with him.

I turned to face my friends with trepidation. This was where we would all offer the front seat to each other, as politeness dictates, even though we each wanted it so badly that we could think of nothing else. To my amazement, they both insisted quite emphatically that I should take the front seat. They said that they were happy enough to ride in the back. Who was I to argue?

As we were walking toward the airplane, Major Juhl spoke again.

"There's this one other thing," he said. "I have a condition that makes me unable to see at night, so you are going to have to fly the plane."

I laughed at his joke and continued to walk toward the Cessna's right side.

"I'm serious," he stated. "I cannot fly after dark; you'll have to fly us home."

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I looked at him and saw that he was very serious indeed. I looked at my friends. They appeared as incredulous as I felt. We were not at all concerned that we were about to get into a plane with a pilot who could not see; at fifteen, we were still immortal, after all. Our amazement was only in response to my luck of being able to sit not only in the front seat, but in the pilot's seat as well. Still expecting him to admit the joke, I shrugged and walked around to the plane's other side.

Although I have flown many times since that night, the memory of that next hour is a blurred timeline from which moments of elation are recalled at random. I can tell you that he had me do everything, explaining as we went. I did the preflight inspection. I started the plane. I taxied the plane, which is something considering that it is infinitely harder to control an airplane when taxiing than it is when taking off. I can only equate this to the fact that it is harder to keep your balance on a bicycle that is not moving than one that is. I did take off, fly, and land the plane, seemingly by myself, although in retrospect I am sure that there was an imperceptible hint of pressure on yoke and rudder from the good Major.

The night was cold and clear when we rose into the sky. The stars were as bright and numerous as the lights of the Port Huron / Sarnia skyline. The air was as smooth as a sheet of glass.

Not a sound was heard within the cockpit. My friends were either scared to death or sound asleep, and I was too intimidated to speak over the headset. Shortly after take off, Major Juhl had told me to set a northern course, so I turned the plane to follow the shore of Lake Huron.

My companions remained silent, I was grateful for the solitude. There was so much to see, so much to feel through the airplane. I maintained my course even as I explored the effects of rudder and aileron. The few bumps in the air thrilled and amazed me as I felt the plane catch itself after each split-second fall.

Clouds rolled in to obscure the stars and I turned my attention to the ground below us. We seemed to be standing still as the earth passed beneath us on a colossal conveyor belt. I wondered at the destinations of the many tiny cars I saw, just as I wondered if the passengers in those cars were watching our blinking lights as they traveled across the sky.

Major Juhl broke into my thoughts by telling me to turn toward the Sandusky Airport. Having grown up in a small town between Sandusky and Port Huron, I was able to turn to the proper heading without thinking about it. He asked how I knew that my heading was correct. I told him that I just knew. He shook his head and explained the importance of using the aircraft's many instruments. To emphasize their significance he had me turn the plane and fly out over Lake Huron.

The sky was completely overcast by this time and we were far enough north that no lights could be seen from Canada's shores. Once the conveyor belt below us turned from land to water, the only thing to see was an oppressive, murky abyss. The first few moments were fun and a little exciting, but as time marched forward I began to feel disoriented. The Major asked me what our altitude was and I read him the numbers on the gauge, but I had the disturbing feeling that the gauge was inaccurate. Was that a

wave I was seeing, or was it a wisp of cloud?

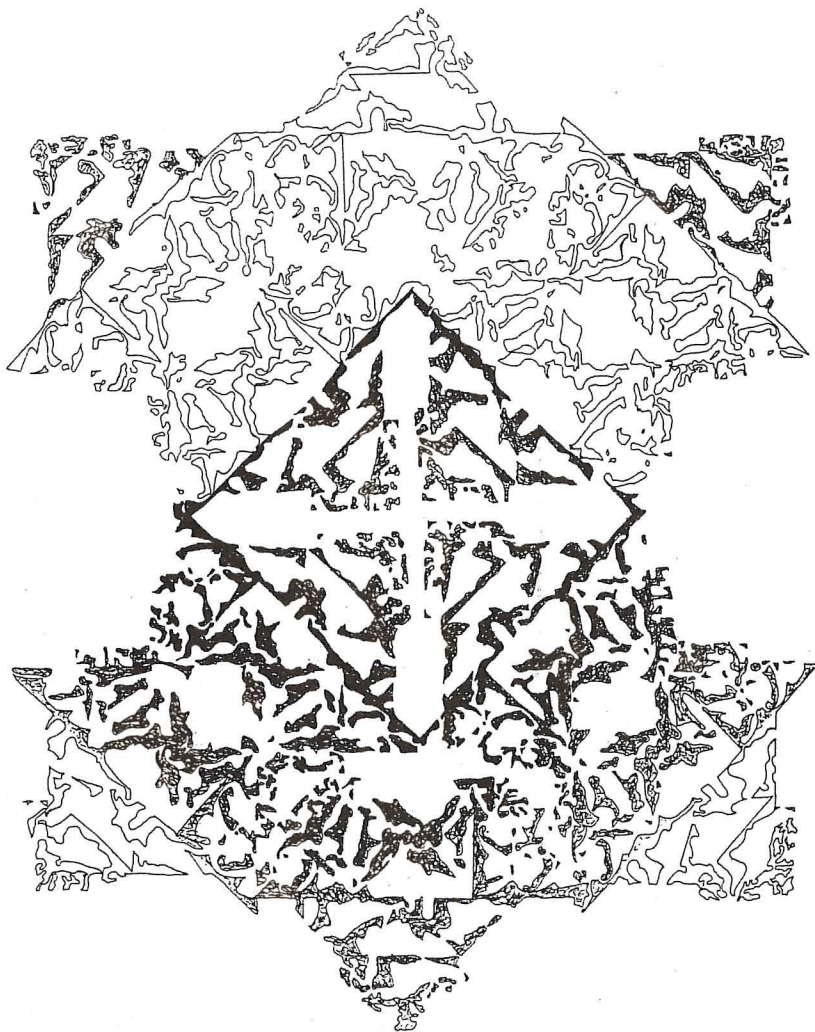
My flying had been smooth and straight when the ground was below me. I had maintained a heading and altitude, seemingly without effort. Without a visual reference, my control grew erratic and my composure gave way to unease. If I kept the altimeter steady, my heading would change. If I maintained the heading, I tended to lose altitude. I grimly continued to fly, hoping that the Major would save us before we plunged into the lake. After he felt I had learned my lesson, he allowed me to turn back toward the shore. The lights on the horizon were a beautiful sight to behold. I took a heading that would lead to the airport, still not needing the compass, but at least this time I mentally noted our bearing.

Seeing the airport's beacon in the distance was a disappointment, for it signaled the end of my first flight, yet I was eager to experience landing too. I have since heard people remark that every landing is actually a controlled crash. Perhaps this is true, but my landing went very smoothly, from the final approach to the breathless moment that exists between the stall warning going off and the wheels touching the ground.

I may never know just how much the Major assisted with my first flight, but I am eternally grateful that he made it as memorable for me as it was. I only hope that I can pass on this experience to one of my own students when I become a flight instructor.

an unfinished memorandum

CHRISTOPHER LOOP

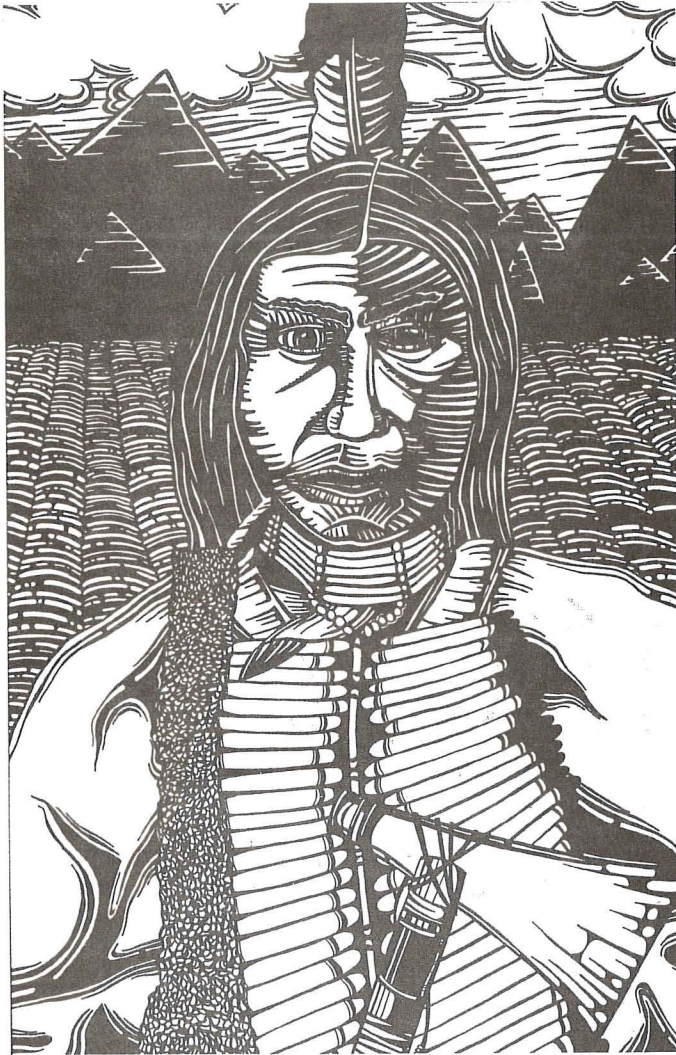


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PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

chief wiggum

ALEXANDER FURCHAK



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PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



the sport of king tut

WALLY HORSEY

Ah! The smell of horse manure permeated the air. A cool fall breeze rippled across the field of summer's scorched grass. The whinny of a horse expecting supper echoed from the far side of the pasture as he ran to the barn. These were my first memories of horse racing, a sport that within the day I would dream of doing for the rest of my life.

"They're standardbred horses," David said with excitement. "This is Tin Man, the 2-year-old colt that's racing tonight."

With those words a career that lasted 20 years would be born.

I was 13 years old; my best friend, David, had invited me to his house one Saturday afternoon to see his uncle's horses. I had never really been involved with horses prior to that day. However, as a child my grandparents kept a couple of ponies for me, so I was quite anxious to see the horses owned by David's uncle.

"Grab him!" David yelled as Tin Man tried to run back towards the open field.

My hand reached for Tin Man's head, he jerked back, then he relaxed as the metal fastener on the lead shank locked to his halter, linking us as one.

I was a bit nervous at first as I walked him down the shed row, between the old half-chewed tack boxes over the dirt-laden floor, but something clicked between Tin Man and myself. We trusted each other. He trudged behind as I lead the way; we stopped short of the barn door where David was holding the crossties.

"We'll get him cleaned up and then Uncle Ed should be here soon," David said hastily.

As we got Tin Man ready we heard the gunning of an engine and clanking of a truck pulling a trailer across the rutted dirt track just outside the barn.

I looked outside just in time to see Ed open the back of the trailer and hear the thump of the ramp crashing to the ground.

"Ed this is my friend, Wally." David introduced us.

Ed reached out his old dirty wrinkled hand and smiled as I firmly grabbed it.

"Glad to meet you, son," Ed said in a ruffled old voice. "Time to get this show on the road, David."

He grabbed the lead shank and escorted Tin Man out of the barn; with a few loud booms up the ramp and into the trailer he went.

"See you boys at the track," Ed mumbled as he climbed back in the cab of the truck.

Later that evening, David and I loaded up in his brother's car for the 15-minute ride to Dover Downs. This was my first trip to the racetrack; however, I'd been by it many times and always wondered what it was like to watch a race.

Post time for the race was at 7:30 pm; the lights around the track were just taking hold as the sun was giving way to the impending night.

Suddenly the bugle blasted the pre-race song.

The announcer crackled over the PA system. "Here are the pacers for tonight's first race, a one-mile event for 2 year old maidens...Number one, Tin Man, owned by Edward Slaughter of Smyrna and driven by..."

I have to admit I really don't remember what was said after that because a surge of excitement washed through my entire body. Here I was at Dover Downs, watching the horse I helped prepare warm up for the race.

Around 8 minutes later the announcer crackled again. "THE STARTER HAS CALLED FOR THE PACERS... Lining up behind the gate, Number one, Tin Man..."

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Who cared what the names of the other horses were, all I needed to hear was Tin Man!

With a shout "THEY'RE OFF AND PACING" the announcer started the race.

I recall quite clearly the resonation of the crowd's excitement growing stronger and louder as the horses approached each quarter pole. When the horses spun off the last turn and headed for home, the thunderous echoes of the gamblers grew to a fevered pitch.

I was screaming with all the strength I could muster, "COME ON TIN MAN! GET UP THERE... SHIT! HERE HE COMES!"

Tin Man was flying up on the outside from the back of the field. The crowd was cheering wildly. I'm sure not all of them were yelling for Tin Man, but the excitement of the crowd was reverberating throughout the haze-filled grandstand as the horses drove hard to the finish line.

Yelling and screaming my lungs out "TIN MAN!" I was almost out of breath just strides from the wire!

With one final surge from the mass of people the horses hit the line.

I turned and yelled to David, "Did he get it?"

"I don't know," he said in a panic. "I lost them at the wire!"

My body was growing with anticipation as we waited for word of the winner.

"The judges have asked for a photo," the announcer bellowed over a hushed crowd.

After what seemed to be an eternity the tote board suddenly sprang to life with the top three finishers... 1st 3, 2nd 1, 3rd ... who really cared. I had the winds knocked from my sails. Tin Man didn't get up for the victory. After a few disappointed moments David looked up.

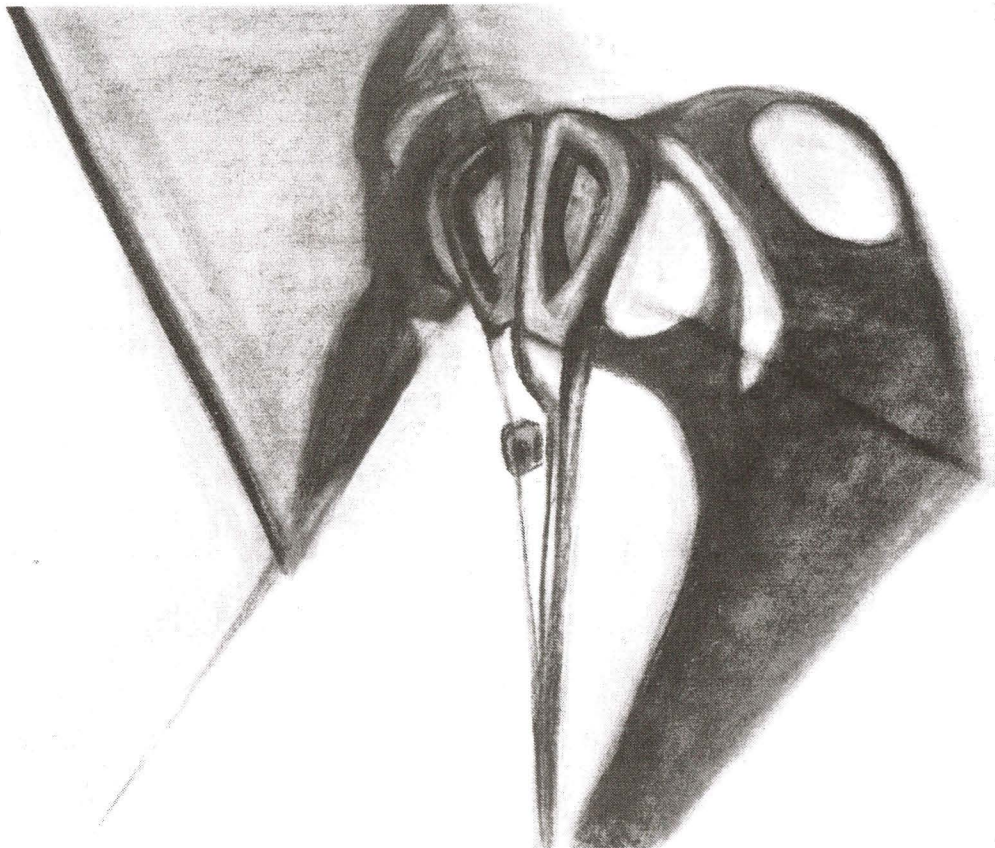
"We have the exacta!" he cheerfully shouted out.

I wasn't quite sure what he meant but my heart was racing wildly as I went to the betting window and cashed the ticket... \$20 for a \$2 bet... like a junkie on heroin, I was hooked!

The year was 1974; I was 13 years old, running around the track with \$20 in my pocket and the feeling of euphoria that can only be experienced! What a night to remember. I would go on to race horses for the next 20 years but for that one night, in the sport of Kings, I was a King! The boy King!

the sharp light

REBEKAH KIRK



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PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



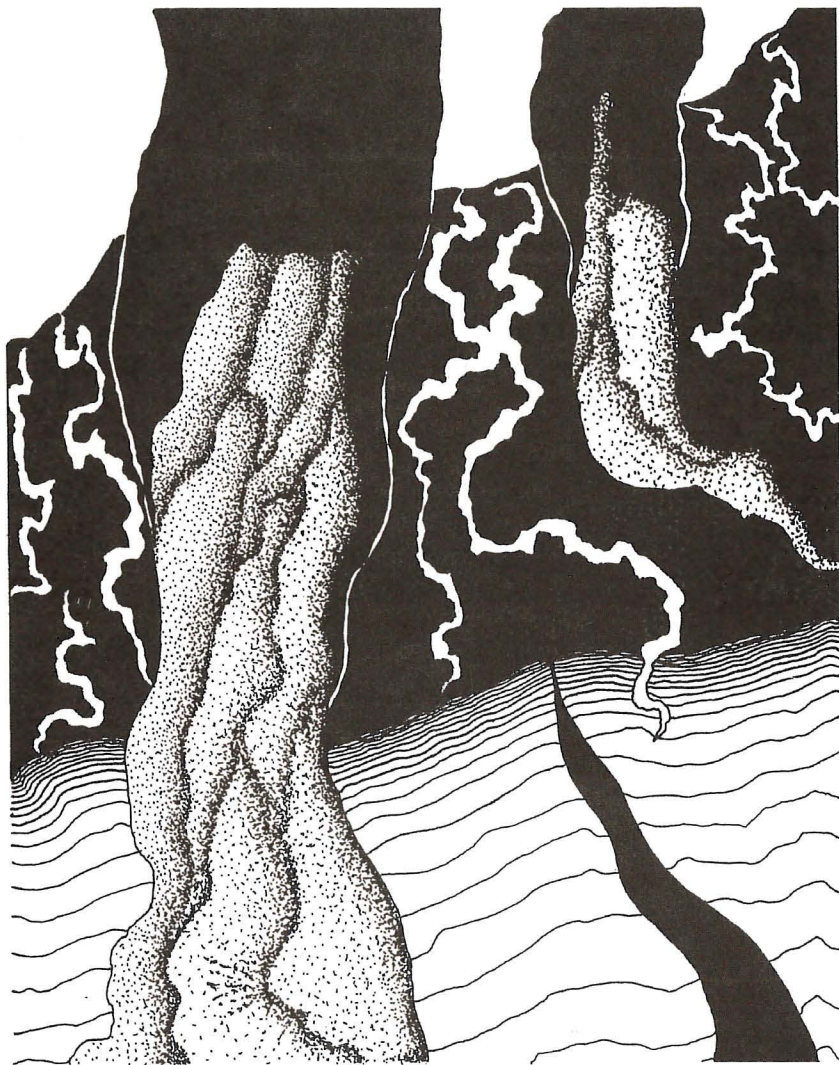
PATRICK BOURKE AWARD

As the recipient of the Patrick Bourke Award for an outstanding Visual Arts student, Kendra Wisson has quietly made art. She rarely missed an art class, always had her work ready for critique and when she was asked what she was thinking about she always replied "well, I don't know, but..." and then it all came pouring out. "I thought I'd try this" - and try she did. She's a student who understands the need for quiet contemplation, to think about an idea, to try an idea, to try it again, to refine it, to push it and then she found that she had more ideas than she had time to develop. And quietly she worked out another idea always challenging and doing more than what was expected. Still her response was "well, I don't know, but..."

When Kendra came to St. Clair County Community College she didn't know what Art and Design were all about, but she did know that somehow it was a part of her and she needed to explore this thing called "ART." As she took classes she liked them, but she still said "well, I don't know, but..." this time it was about what she would do beyond SC4. Then this year she took an Art History class and she knew that this was different. Yes, it was about art - but it was about all kinds of art - sculpture, painting, design - and it was from everywhere in the world and it was old and new and it was exciting. Now Kendra knows what to do next and plans to transfer to Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids, Michigan to explore Art History with an emphasis in conservation and restoration. Kendra, make the world safe for art and continue to ask the questions.

free coconut

KENDRA WISSON

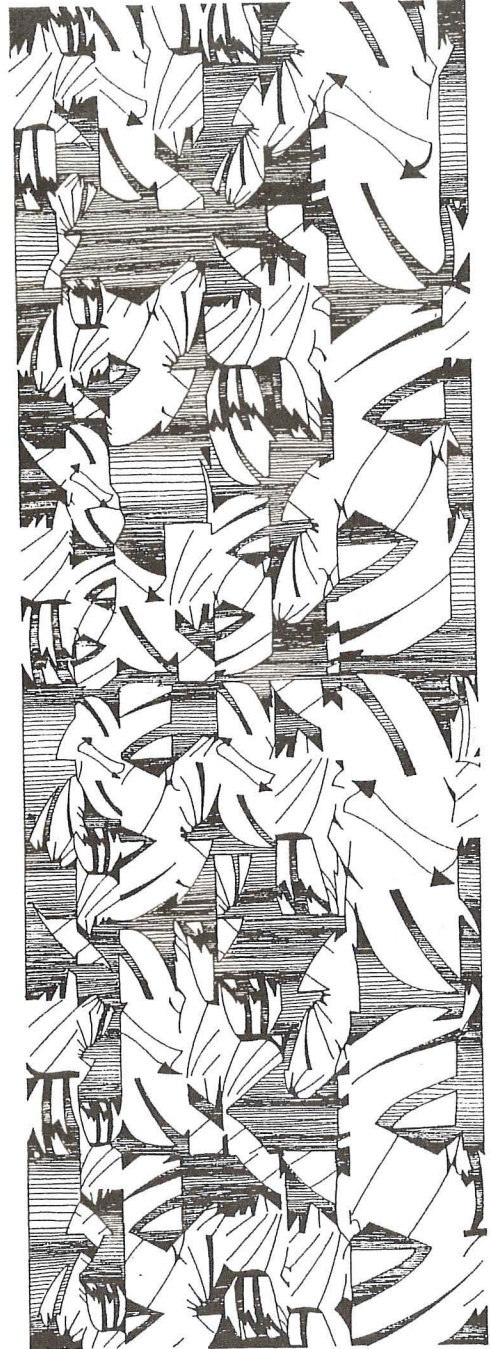


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PATTERNS **Bourke Award**

visage

KRISTOPHER MAXWELL



backlash? it's whiplash!

SHARON WARREN

My daughter is now home on a winter break from college in the South. Heavy bass vibrations travel through the walls of our house along with lyrics that go something like this: "feline feminine fantastical women ...you hoe who you are ...it's hoes in the room hoes in the car," and on and on.

The C.D. cracked into silver fragments that fell to the hardwood floor onto a slant of soft morning sunlight. I felt no guilt or remorse in destroying my daughter's property. As I swept the splintered pieces into a dustpan, I was sure the garbage was exactly where *Ludicrous* should feel most at home. His doggerel, and that of most other young male popular rappers, communicates misogynistic and colorful methods that work to insult the numerous women that, apparently, just can't bear to tear themselves away from them. Their words are peacock proud and imply that such conquests have no more sense than to be obliging, needy, and humiliated in the most graphic and gross of fashions. How could any female listen to this? I was told, "The words don't really matter, sure we listen to what they say – but don't take it seriously." And not only listen to it, my nineteen year old offspring had actually

purchased, *paid for*, this piece of ... well, work. I refuse to be infected. As I surfed over the *Cosmo* magazines on my way out of her room, I knew it was true – somewhere along the line between my generation and hers, feminism (defined simply by its fundamental principle of gender equality) had faltered.

The rapper's lyrics and other comparable images and messages that we are bombarded with daily on TV, in films, magazines, and via Internet banner ads, convince me that, although women have made some substantial strides, essentially we still remain at square one. We, as women, can now access education and enter professions previously closed to us, yet we still lag behind in career opportunity, make less money than a male of equal status, and we need to make sure that we look damn good while we're at it. Women comprise over 60% of the workforce yet still remain the primary childcare giver and household manager. American women have gained status, and certainly much responsibility, yet equality in all aspects of society and the rewards that go along with certain hierarchal powers continue to elude us. This is no time for complacency.

President Bush recently allocated \$300 million to promote marriage

among welfare recipients when the real economic problems that not only foster, but promise, poverty for the single female head of household are ignored. We need not be further motivated; marriage and motherhood are planted solidly, indelibly ingrained, in the dreams of the youngest of girls. Marriage is already an unconscious act of desperation, something a woman feels she must be, to be. Indeed, if we weren't so pressured to be married, the number of women who find themselves as struggling single parents because of ill-chosen mates would plausibly plummet. Welfare or Workfare *will not* work to lift women above the poverty line without subsidized childcare and vocational or academic instruction. The United States is the *only* industrialized nation that does not support its women citizens in this manner. In fact, the near absence of educational grants along with the increasing requirements of time to be spent in Workfare (soon to be 40 hours a week in New York State) essentially insures that women receiving aid simply will not have the time nor the resources to indulge in attending school or university. As the "Education President" has claimed knowledge to be the key to upward mobility, he dismisses the needs of the struggling encumbered right beneath his

nose. Class-based moralizing has never been successful in any period of history and it is guaranteed to have zero value in improving the economic state of women in this country at this time as well. And while a happy marriage is certainly a worthy ideal, it will not be our salvation, nor should it be.

While social safety nets and attempts to marry off the poorest of us are an inadequate defense, a lack of empowerment for all women cannot be even partially blamed on a coven of conservative male patriarchs that concocts schemes to subliminally cause us to be under-employed, under-educated, under-represented, and prance around in underwear also designated as *butt floss*. Great conspiracy theory, yet it hardly pans out. We are those that do not organize and demand higher wages. We are those who do not protest in hallowed hallways and press for education, childcare, and adequate and equal healthcare. We are the ones who buy the Barbie dolls, allow anatomically correct stripper dolls (pole included) to be marketed and sold in toy stores. We are the ones who pay thousands of dollars for numb but erect breasts, scarred yet flat bellies, *Botox* jobs, nose jobs, and fervently desire the wisdom of how to deliver that extraordinary other

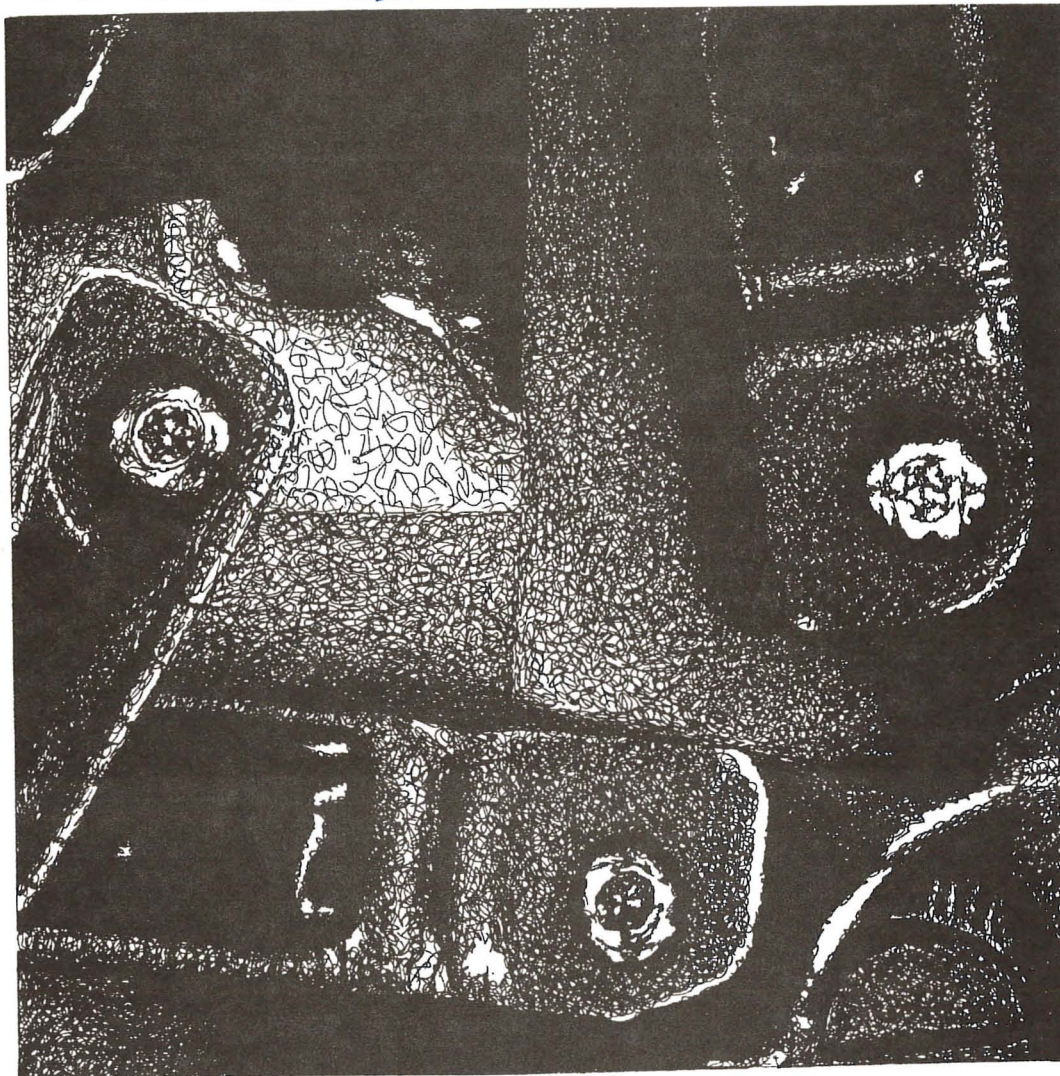
job. One obvious answer for women's failure to progress, the etiology of the symptoms above, is the lack of cohesion or collaboration between the members of our own sex. Women are ambitious and do compete, but rarely to excel in specific areas of expertise – we bid our battles against each other. We continue to be locked into a bondage of superficial, contrived femininity that demands that we play roles that perpetually function to grip us in a type of limbo; it keep us back, *it holds us down*.

The feminization of poverty continues to rapidly increase in the U.S. and savagely more so in third world nations. Our sisters across the oceans attempt to struggle against barbarous violence, deprivation, and persecution. And on and on. Women, just as my daughter, have forgotten or fail to realize the omnipotent force of the spoken word. Women, by sheer numbers alone (along with a myriad of other influences), have the capability to raise their voices and turn these situations around. We have the power to prosper and raise each other up. But we don't.

I catch a glimpse of my reflection as I carry the mirrored shards to be covertly hidden in the trash. I have seen the enemy, and She is Us.

wired

JODY PARMANN

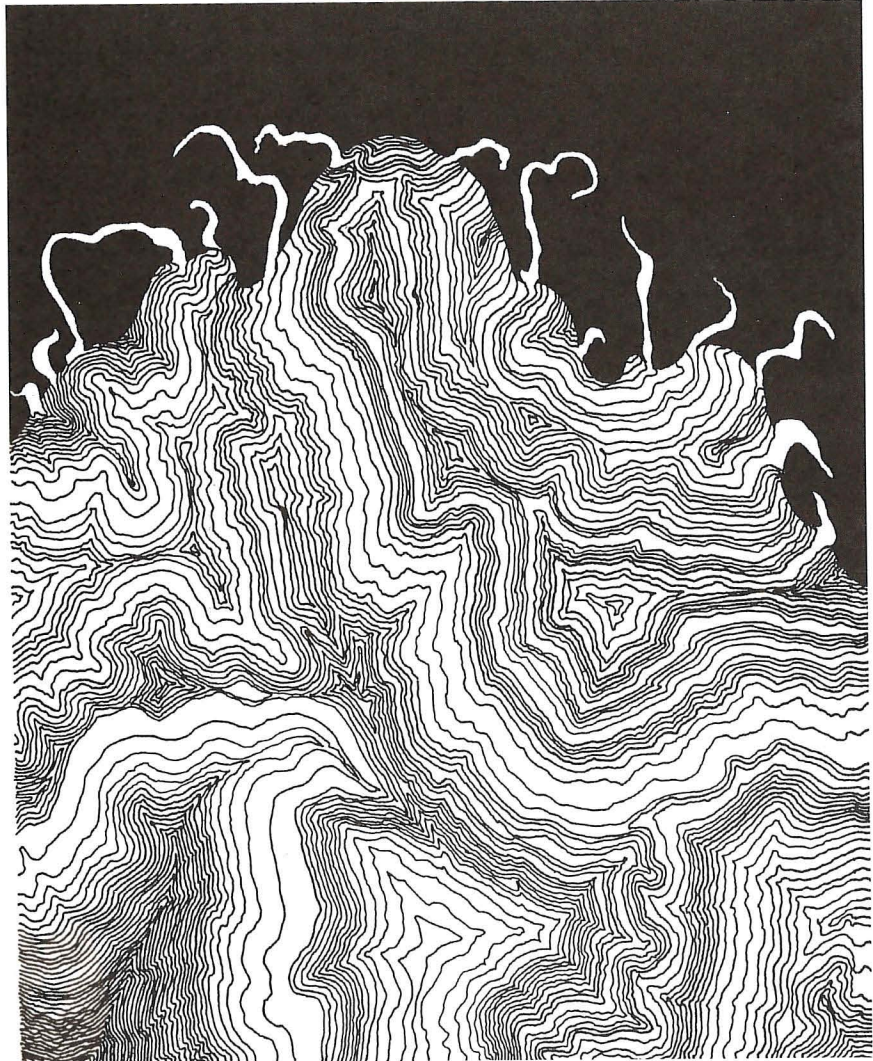


47

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

biomorphic coconut lines

KENDRA WISSON



48

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land of the flies

CHRISTINE RYAN SASS

I plan it all year. I research it, ponder it, change my mind several times – the family vacation.

When our two children were younger, vacationing was a breeze. My husband, Doug, and I could go anywhere we pleased; we just plopped the kiddies in the back seat and took off. Now that they are 13 and 10, consideration must be given to their tolerance level, boredom being the bane of this age group.

This brings me to last summer's Copper Harbor family bonding experience. Doug and I love the Upper Peninsula. The laid-back pace and exquisite scenery is such a welcome respite from the harried, insane pace that is our daily lives. Unfortunately, our children do not share this opinion, viewing all of the above as excruciatingly mind-numbing.

With expectations of unforgettable fun, we trekked northward before dawn one Saturday morning in early July. Temperatures were unusually hot and humid, nearing 100 degrees. We longed to escape to the cooler climes of the North Country. The kids were still sleeping as we approached the magnificent Mackinaw Bridge.

When we stopped for lunch, the dreaded "How much longer?" commenced. We told the kids it was a "pretty long" drive. Armed with Game Boy, CD player, and snacks, our little darlings resignedly settled in for the long haul.

After motoring through such tiny bergs as Germfask, Three Lakes, and Chassell, we finally reached the Keweenaw Peninsula and the road leading to the tip of Michigan. Rachel and Michael had been remarkably patient up to this point but were starting to get cranky.

"Are we almost there?" demanded Rachel.

"Not too much longer now, guys," I announced, stretching the truth a bit.

The inevitable nitpicking had begun.

"He's kicking my seat," Rachel bleated.

"Tell her to turn around, she keeps looking at me," Michael crabbed.

We finally arrived in Copper Harbor; tired, cranky and hungry. We could see the sparkling waters of Lake Superior as we slowly made our way up and down the main drag a couple of times trying to locate our motel. I finally spotted a tiny sign pointing to our motel/campground. We drove down a

narrow lane and up to the modest check-in cabin.

Exiting the van, I was surprised and more than a little dismayed to feel the oppressive heat and humidity that we hoped we had left down state. In the cramped little office, a fan perched on the countertop vainly oscillated tepid air. The owner commented on the unusual heat wave the area was experiencing. She also informed us the "black flies" were still quite plentiful, advising us to turn the fan in our room facing outward to blow them away from the screen door. I had heard tales of these annoying pests, but had never been in the UP when they were "in season."

Rumpled and sticky, we dragged our luggage up to the second floor of the weathered motel and opened the door to room number five. Heat hit us like a hammer. The accommodations were clean but spartan. We scrambled to find the air conditioner, but all we discovered was a mini-fan sitting on a table in the corner. Desperate for cool air, I threw open the smaller than average-sized sliding door leading out onto a tiny balcony. I stepped outside eager to catch a hint of a breeze, when suddenly I was bombarded by black flies over every square inch of my body. I shook them off and quickly jumped back into the safety of our room.

The children had now gone into major-whine mode, and I fought the urge to join them. We needed an immediate plan of attack. I decided to dial the office for suggestions on restaurants for dinner, but there was no telephone.

The four of us trudged down to the van, cranking up the air conditioning. We located a restaurant with a picturesque view of the lake. We made a beeline to the entrance anticipating a soothing burst of cold air as we opened the door. No such luck. Realization was dawning that no establishment in this secluded North Country hamlet had air conditioning. At dinner, ice cubes vanished as fast as they were put in our glasses.

We took a family vote and it was unanimous to shorten our stay in this quaint village. Anxious to make reservations at the Best Western near the Porcupine Mountains, we located the only pay phone in town. Unfortunately, it accepted every credit card known to man except the one I possessed.

I eventually found an 800 number for the motel in our AAA tour book and we were in business. The next morning, feeling slightly fuzzyheaded from a night of tossing and turning in the furnace that was our motel room, we each took a refreshing shower but could not dry off. As soon as we would towel off, the humidity would drench us again. It was a struggle just to put on our clothes.

Jumping in the van, we headed out to a recommended four-mile hiking trail. Doug's only wish for this trip was to do some hiking, show the kids what "getting back to nature" was all about. Rachel's first

question was "how long will this take?" I replied with one of the many "white-lies" that parents are allowed, saying "Oh, about a half hour."

We received no respite from the temperatures as we tramped along the shaded trails. As the terrain became more challenging, Rachel was getting more agitated, venting her irritation with remarks such as, "I wish I was at the mall right now!" and, "If you've seen one tree, you've seen them all!"

Undaunted, Doug led his motley crew through the woods. I am not in the best of shape and it showed with my huffing and puffing, trying to keep up. Michael lagged behind, leading me by the hand, afraid I was going to croak right there on the spot.

When we were finally back at the van Doug enthused, "Wasn't that invigorating?" Our fearless leader's enthusiasm was met with much grumbling and eye rolling.

At this point, we decided a breezy boat ride was in order. We opted for a tour of the lighthouse across the bay. As we trooped down to the docks to wait for our boat to arrive, we chatted with a group of returning tourists who mentioned this year's unusual heat and humidity. They informed us that last year they were in Copper Harbor at the very same time and it was in the 60's, blowing and cold. Aaahh, the thought of cold winds blowing across my sweaty, grubby body was intoxicating!

The black flies quickly brought me back to reality. The dozen or so of us waiting on the dock looked like we had poison ivy as we twitched and gyrated, swatting away the relentless beasts. One brave soul

sat on the steps leading down to the docks making it his mission to annihilate every one of the pesky devils. "That makes 49!" he declared with another swat of his cane.

Once on the boat, the blessed breeze cooled us and gave us a brief reprieve from the annoying invaders. However, the little critters did keep folks on the move as we toured the stately old lighthouse and grounds. I located a spot on a bluff that had a magnificent view of the harbor and was also breezy enough to keep the flies at bay.

When it was time to head back to the dock to await the return of our boat, we were immediately peppered with the little demons. We must have resembled an ancient clan performing some sort of tribal war dance as we whacked and stomped.

Upon returning to our room that evening, it was hotter than ever. We decided to make it an early night, not having the courage to venture out to the lake to stick even a toe in the water to cool off. The flies had won the battle.

The four of us stripped down to our underwear and lay on top of the sheets awaiting each rotation of the little fan doing its mighty best to cool us off. When morning finally came, we packed our bags and hightailed it out of town.

We motored down the scenic Keweenaw Peninsula and westward toward the Porcupine Mountains. We looked forward to the modern facilities that awaited us, having stayed there before, and assured the children

that it did have air conditioning and an in-door pool.

Things were looking up when we entered our room and cranked the air conditioning on full blast. We oohed and ahed, and I mean to tell you, it was the closest thing to heaven at that moment in time. We left it churning out cold air as we departed for another one of Doug's "invigorating hikes."

As we contentedly sat on the rocky ledge that overlooked the spectacular Lake of the Clouds, I wondered if perhaps we had left the air conditioning in our

room set too high. With a chuckle, I envisioned returning to our room to find the maid had turned into a block of ice and frost an inch thick on the windows.

That evening, as the four of us sat on the shore of Lake Superior mesmerized by a dazzling sunset and swatting away a few straggling black flies, I bravely asked "Now, this vacation hasn't been so bad, has it?" Doug heartily agreed, but the children shot me dubious looks.

My mind raced as I started to formulate plans for next summer's family holiday.

BLANCHE REDMAN AWARD

“Leaving”

This poem has in interesting counterpointing of specific concrete images and somewhat surreal or at least metaphysical thrusts in those images. It takes us from a path on a single night to the sea and stars, a kind of internal odyssey. It is ambitious and heartfelt, encompassing an enormous amount of material in a relatively short space.

52

poetry

FIRST PLACE POETRY

“Marine City Poem”

What struck me first about this poem was the interesting personification, not for its own sake but as a way to increase the stakes of the poem as it moves from a single street into the past - and outward away from any solipsistic sense of self - and then returns but with a more knowing sense gained by all that has gone on in the poem.

SECOND PLACE POETRY

“After Hard Frost”

This poem deftly uses its images to create a mood, saying a few words what it usually takes us pages to explain - the last stanza especially is sharp and focus, providing a complex counterpoint between violence and beauty. The poem moves gradually to uncover its own newspaper “story.”



leaving

SHARON WARREN

Acorns in abundance, my feet skid over them on the downhill path.
Walking alone at night, I start to hear them. Falling like great solid
raindrops bouncing against the cement street. Cracking underfoot,
their phallic heads severed – the meat, the heart of them now spilled forth.

The gas lamps cast my silhouette again then again. My shadow resting
yet rising from the sidewalk, mottled by the surrendered seeds,
symptom of some lethal disease or defect. Nearing the lake,
the Big Dipper lies on the horizon nearly scooping into the still, black water.

A pilot boat, red and blue lights blinking, turns back from a freighter.
The ship goes on silently, unafraid. Into the darkness, into the stars.
Hurrying to remove my clothes and shoes, the metal of the jetty is cold.
but the water will be warmer. A boundless bath of history and possibility.

The lights of the freighter beckon as if they were a string of sapphires just
beyond my grasp. Swimming hard to catch up to their shimmering, each
breath over-echoing breath. Algae tugs and undulates from my hips like some
mermaid's gala pubic skirt. The ladder is rusted and scrapes the skin of my fingers.

I cling to the side of this massive mechanical whale, waiting... Waiting
to be taken over the edge of this saltless sea. Into the darkness, back to the stars.

53

PATTERNS
Redman Award

marine city poem

CHANDRA HOPPE

10th street is saying something about loss
4th whispers it to the river
who carries the feeling, and floods.

it finds you kneeling downriver
makes a wave of itself
washes over your knees, and you remember.

this is where we ate ice cream
and you wore a toy store cowboy hat
and dreamt of Canada

watching ferries shuttle back and forth
and when the sun went down
watching ferry lights do the work

you were not born here.
freighters did not silently carry their weight into your dreams
and meet you in mornings sounding like trains

your grandfather's-and-mother's ashes
are not playing in the water you dangle your legs over.
so Canada is your mystery, and you are mine.

and what has changed?

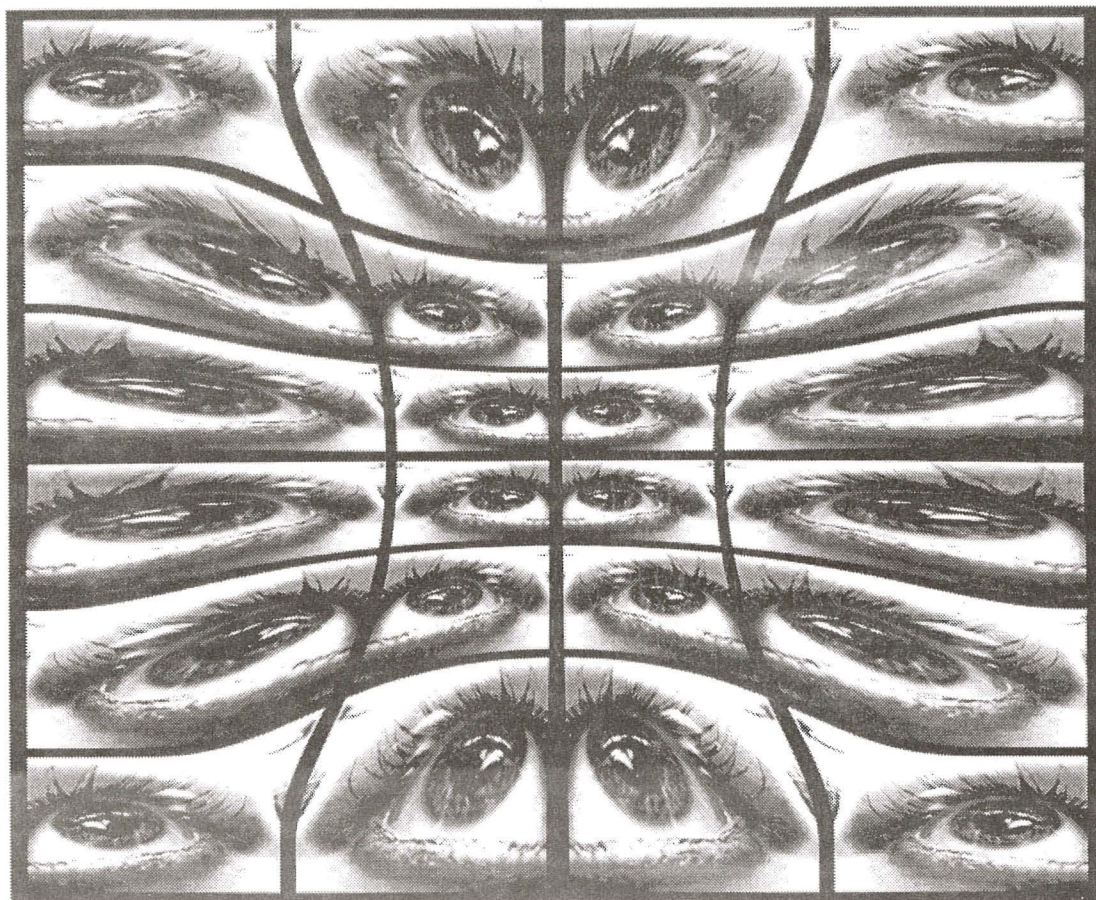
it is snowing it is snowing it is knowing
I will never find you here again that brings me back.

54



eye spy

KIMBERLY SOBANSKI



55

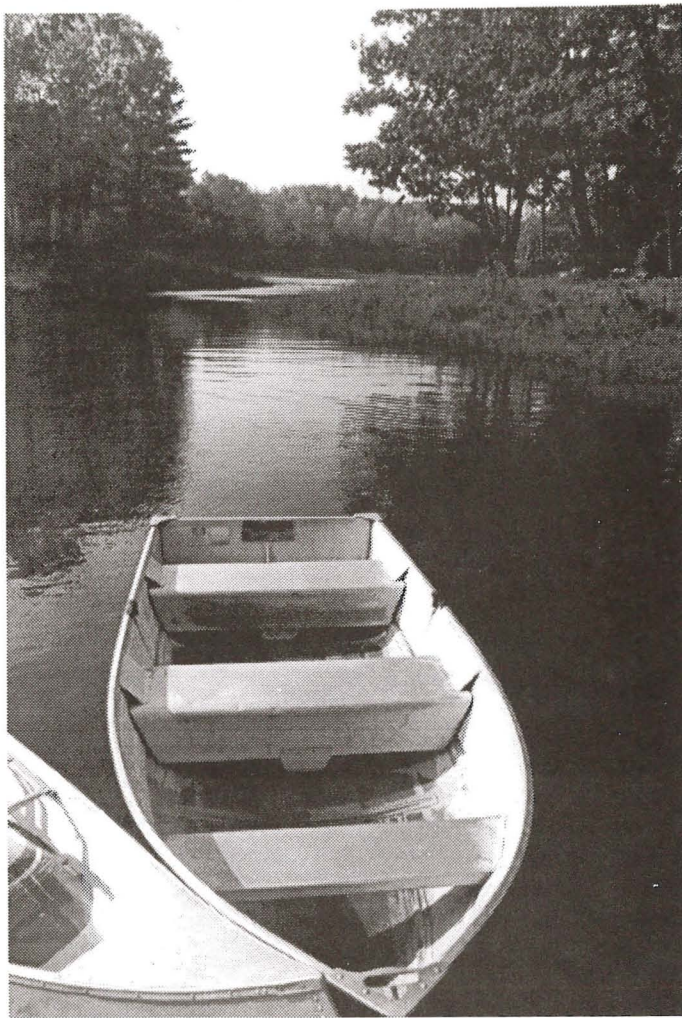
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the boat

JULIE GORDON

56

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



after hard frost

MARY M. ANDERSON

No need now for the newspaper mulch
or composted leaves. The garden
gave up the ghost last night.

The coreopsis at each end
droop as in shame, leaves woebegone.
And petunias bow their heads, bereft.

Impatiens and marigolds turn to rust.
Small, shiny,
slimy beetles tunnel
through muck scabbed with clay.

A rabbit's head, left as a calling card
by the hawk that swoops at night,
almost smothers one valiant red geranium.

57

small things

WILLIAM S. CORNELL

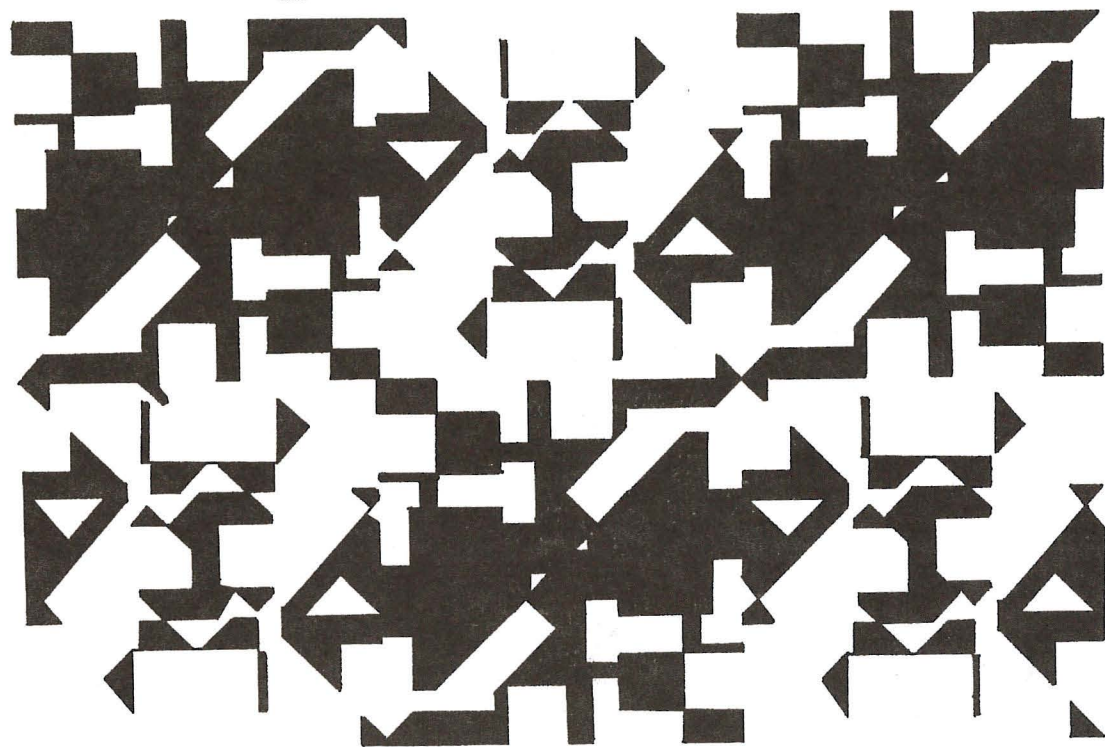
The seed fell on a hostile spot—the crest
of a steep hill. The tree was forced to sink
its tap root deep before it could reach up.
The narrowest of rings marked each year's growth,
for water mostly ran to lower spots.
The deprivation kept it small and gnarled,
but after many years it began to yield
a Spartan crop of pears, which tumbled down
the hill and made a treat for passing deer.

Alone, a man trudged through the woods in fall.
His twisted finger joints and lumpy knees
were aching in the damp. His camping gear
seemed heavier than when he purchased it.
I should have made this trip when I was young,
he thought. My life has not been notable
for good decisions. Stopping for a rest,
he spotted the runt tree. An impulse made
him want to eat a pear. He needed all
four limbs to make it panting to the top.
He twisted loose a fruit, removed his pack,
and leaned against the trunk. I'll have to phone
to get a cab come rescue me at the
next place I cross a road. He felt ashamed.
He bit the pear. The meat was gritty, but
the juice was sweet and dribbled down his arm.



dragon

CATHERINE STEINBORN



59

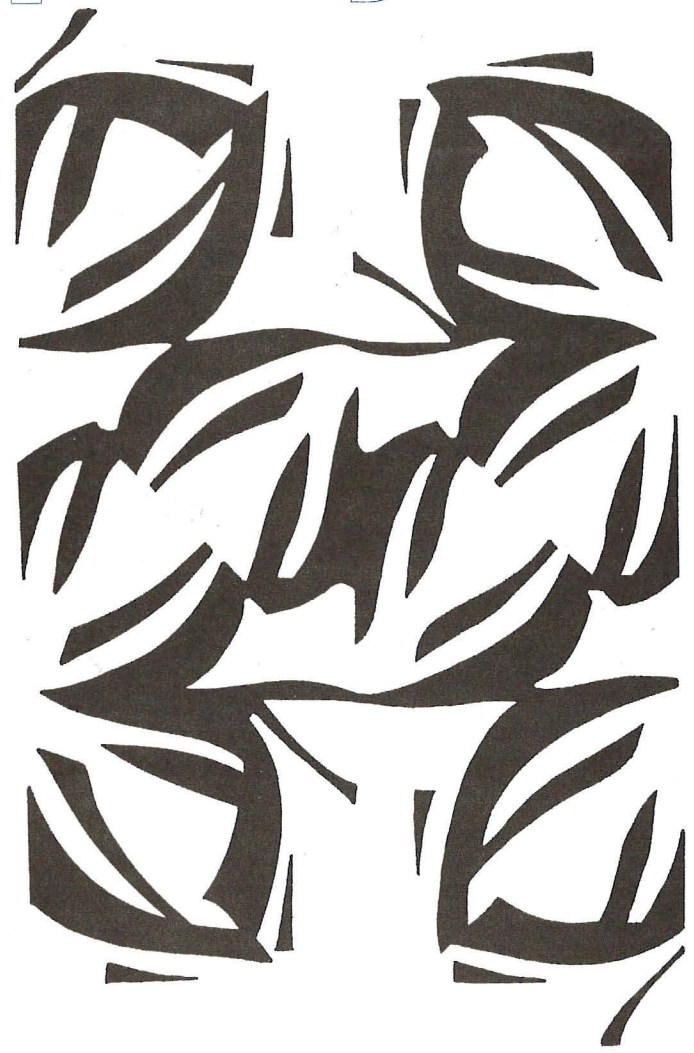
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phavy
DEREK KAPA

60

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



moving up the food chain

WILLIAM S. CORNELL

While sitting on a log, the amateur
philosopher expounded on the mind
and gave his skates a yank to force them over
a triple layer of socks. His audience spun
in graceful pirouette while tuning out
his declarations on the inner life.

Across the ice, a man with pole and tackle
hoped the yammering kid would shut his head.
The tug of cold, slow life was best enjoyed
in silence troubled only by the wind.
The bear was out because the day was warm
for winter, and he craved a substantial snack.

The bear approached the frozen lake. He tried
to catch the skaters, who fled in speedy terror.
The fisher, though, was unaware. The bruin
removed him from his shack like a boxed lunch.
He ate the string of perch as well but left
the bait, for who wants grubs when meat abounds?

61

coffee house dreams

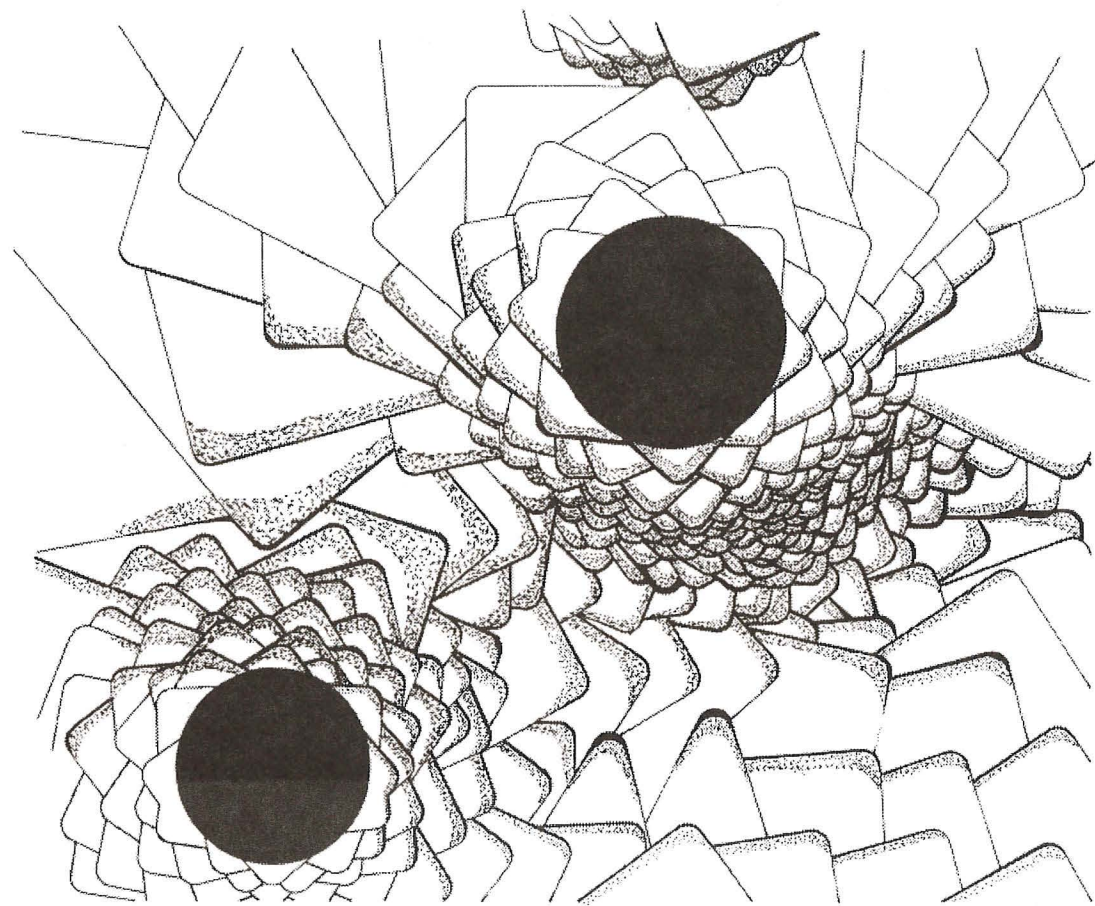
DIANA VANTROOSTENBERGHE

c d
o h r
f o e
f u a
e s m
e e s

*cinnamon hazelnut
caresses your harried soul
as intimate murmurings
flow into your awareness
conversations pool into
a pond of tranquility
lovingly cradle
your cup of lusciousness
embrace the soothing intoxication*

once no end

RICHARD TIERNAN



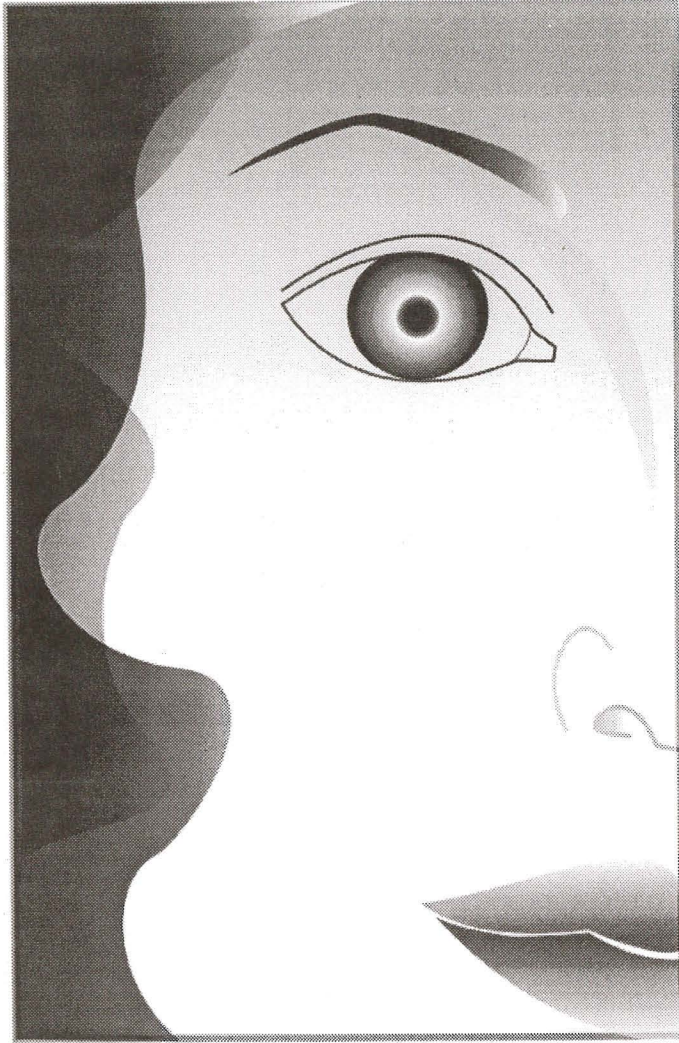
63

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



me

CATHERINE STEINBORN



64

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



exit

5

CHANDRA HOPPE

"I am letting this room
and everything in it
stand for my ideas about love
and its difficulties."

We're speaking our own private constellations
and when our absent-minded stars collide
their destruction whispers mythology.
what is beyond memory we cannot lose.

you become the tiger, Iphis becomes the man,
stretching cat-like across the ancient mattress marking time
light seeps through the blinds playing stripes across your body
I'm counting them with innocent fingers
"numbered pages, the future."

this room where I will lose you
is a lesson in patience, at night
your small scarred hands whisper
'we will be our own undoing.'

the cold morning light
and the patterns of your tears
make the myths of our time
these are the things I see without opening my eyes.

Quotes provided by Lee Young Li's [This Room And Everything In It](#).

65

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Poetry

small world

ANGELA TAYLOR

My world is small.
Here, Popsicles are penicillin.
A purple tyrannosaurus dispenses life lessons like
Little pieces of Pez.
Good guys always win.

Magic is real.
Chocolate milk is on tap
And Santa Claus is God.
Candy is one of the 4 basic food groups.

At first, I longed to hear news from bigger worlds.
I would try to sneak in the weather report
before the animated antics of a colossal crimson canine.
To read the meaty part of the Sunday paper...
A treat.
One time, I did.
I liked it better when spiders were scarier than snipers—
The greatest tragedy, misplacing a cookie.

My world is small.
I like it better that way.

for helen

ANGELA TAYLOR

The thief began small:
Her reading glasses,
The TV remote,
The recipe for chocolate drop cookies—
(The ones her children loved).

He became bolder with time.
Bills went unpaid.
Her curling iron smoldered at 2 a.m.
A quick run to the store concludes in Kalamazoo.

She has been robbed:
Her freedom, home,
Children, memories...
Peace of mind.

He has deprived her of everything.
She can no longer walk or speak.
She has forgotten how to swallow.
The thief has stripped her to her soul...
All that remains is an empty pulse.

67

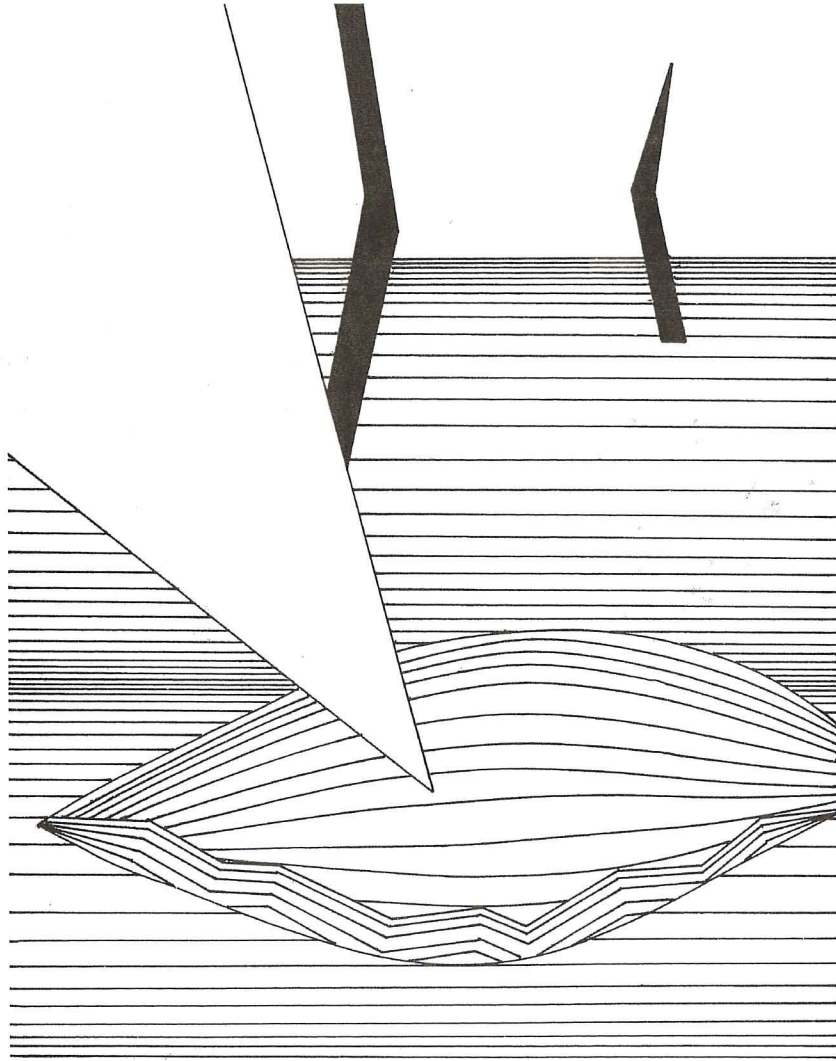
mercy

SHARON WARREN

Blue and white snowflake gowns reveal various states of backsides hospital issued beige footies with gripper bottoms always one missing between tangled bed sheets Dorothy a regular wears a nylon nightgown with a little lace on top during her therapy I have to bite my lip remembering how we joked that she gives us an argument against weight loss since she can take the skin between her neck and chin and sling it back over her shoulders like the scarf of Isadora Duncan chenille robes piled with lint splotted with nonspecific polymorphic multi-colored stains and secretions sanguine circles under eye orbs magenta nail beds amber blisters weeping chartreuse snot blood tainted urine there is constant noise electronic and corporeal constant murmuring of televised illuminations of human banality constant calling from the little old lady in 323 Louise Louise so many machines are buzzing or beeping or ticking always alarming without alarm the ventilator became disconnected while they lifted him to make a sling for his nether parts swollen to the size of some exotic fruit these authentic angels of mercy execute a myriad of missions a thousand times a day to lessen the overwhelming onslaught of want and pain the patient in oncology asks please don't leave me grasping at the air I can't see his eyes are screwed up tight against the fluorescent lights why not I ask he says I don't want to see anymore there's no time for consolation patting his arm hoping for the sedation to take him quickly back to the safe escape of sleep remembering that flash of storm sea green reflected in the rearview mirror as you pulled away from the parking lot. I know I said.

geometric coconut

KENDRA WISSON



69

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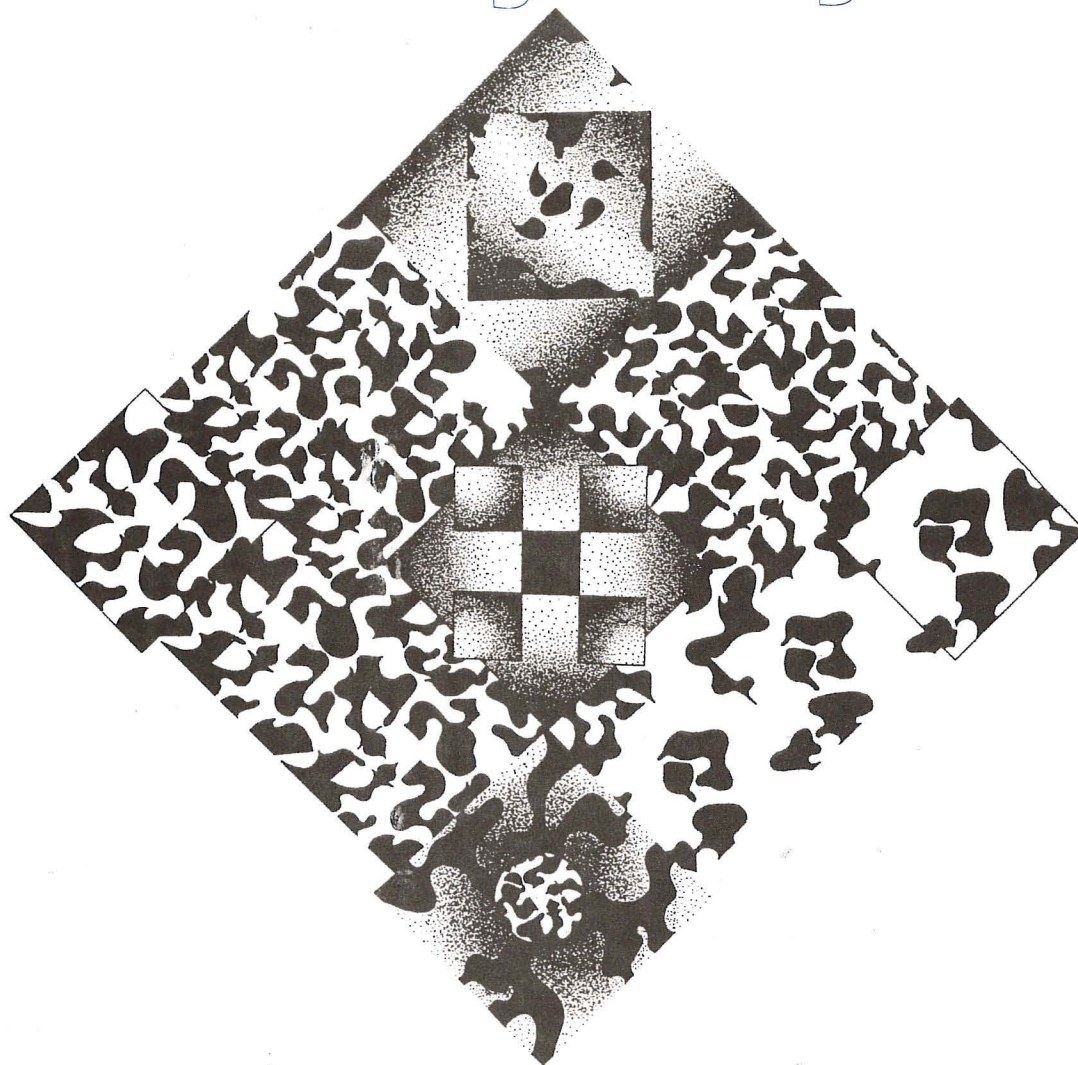


cosmic jersey

TONI KREVIINGHAUS

70

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



girl in doorway

SHARON WARREN

After viewing the latest exhibit,
we stand outside the Art Institute
huddled in a small group.
Our heads thrown back to gaze upon
the saints of Art and Wisdom,
the gargoyles that protect the temple.
Their faces bear grotesque and disapproving
frowns magnified by the indigo twilight.
The November air displays our words
as we discuss the inevitable question,
"Where, oh where, shall we have our dinner?"

Inside the car, one of us
has a camera. Digital dervish, it
whirs and clicks at architecture
of then and now and the desolate
in between. Blocks of cindered lots
are littered with broken glass
and white plastic bags that ruffle in the wind.
A thousand discarded still lifes
like so many gulls on an empty beach.

There is no photo taken of her, nor
it may be possible, do any exist.
Or it may be that there are many
pictures—Polaroid poses.
She is 12, maybe 13. Her hair is long,
the same color as her leather skirt
that barely reaches her ivory thigh.
The same color as the worn black
sandaled heels she perches on.
Leaning, hand on hip, against
the arched entrance of the apartment building
on Cass Avenue—She stares out
with dark judging eyes and watches me,
driving by, stunned by her youth
her already hardening beauty.

Her fingers are stubby, slivers of dirt moons
at the tips, blue polish chipped.
She turns to pick at the peeling paint of the doorway,
at pieces of color that reveal layers of time,
leaden layers of time
that reveal other children
who dreamt naïve dreams—
who sought their mother's soft side,
soft arms, a soft place
that was sanctuary.

Instead, she lies with men
upon a soiled bed doing,
only god and the roaches know what.

71

unequal footing

DEBBIE BIEDERWOLF

Weathered gray planks, evenly spaced and purposefully placed,
lie beneath the feet of those who put them there.
Muscular men with heavy tools manhandled these boards into submission
with hammers and nails and screaming saws.
Mismatched butted edges show the forced mating of two unsuited to each other.
Misfit, they are held in place by nails and screws,
But curling ends pop nails and stubbornly refuse to conform;
a heartwood core cannot be manipulated.
Untainted by stains and sealers, the sticky life-blood within stirs,
secretly rising to the sun-warmed surface,
Where it clings to our soles, has the last laugh, and reminds us there are no masters.



shopping

JULIE GORDON

Late afternoon,
busy shoppers,
tiredly stand in line,
mindlessly unloading carts.

The scent of cologne
reaches through
my weary mind,
and I turn to say,
"Hello Dad."
But you aren't there.
Instead, I see a stranger,
Mindlessly unloading
his cart.
Why isn't it you, I think.
I try to remember
if I said goodbye.
Or if I ever really said,
hello.
I'm sorry, he said.

You were my father for many years.
But did I know *you*?
People say we were alike,
you and I.
You are as stubborn as me, he said.
We were close,
I thought,
as close as
two lost people can be.

I see a daughter,
my age
with a father
your age.
Life is so unfair Dad...
And I feel the emptiness
your absence has left.
Gone 14 years now.
It's hard to believe.
You are a great grandpa, I say.
Your grandson is a man now
a father,
a good father.
Your head nods approval,
I see you scoop a baby
high in the air
and your laughter matches his.
I see you, he says.
You left us too soon.
There were still many things
I needed to know,
Too many questions left
unanswered.

I take one last whiff of cologne,
and push my cart away.

c is for cookie

DIANE BOWDEN

Consider the cookie,
that common, crunchy confection—
succulent morsel of international reputation,
Vienna, Milano, Parisienne.

Stroll through the Archway
into Fields of golden brown rapture.
Walk up to the tree and grab a Fig, Newton
Pat at the Toll House as you go.

Get a glimpse of Girl Scouts marching
in meticulous rank and file.
Thin Mints—Heaven(ly) Siren scent—
tempt all who wander near.

Dunk until you're Double Stuffed.
Exhilarating black crackle envelopes
exquisite white velvet.
Ohhh, Oreo.

Even Ben and Jerry covet that chewy, soul sustaining,
melt-in-your-mouth moment of raw ecstasy.
They locked it into an icy prison but
cannot break its spirit.

Each delectable mouthful,
borne at the hands of tiny elves
or Grandmas or pasty-faced doughboys, is
comfort, surcease, home.



the courtyard

KELLY LOSSING



75

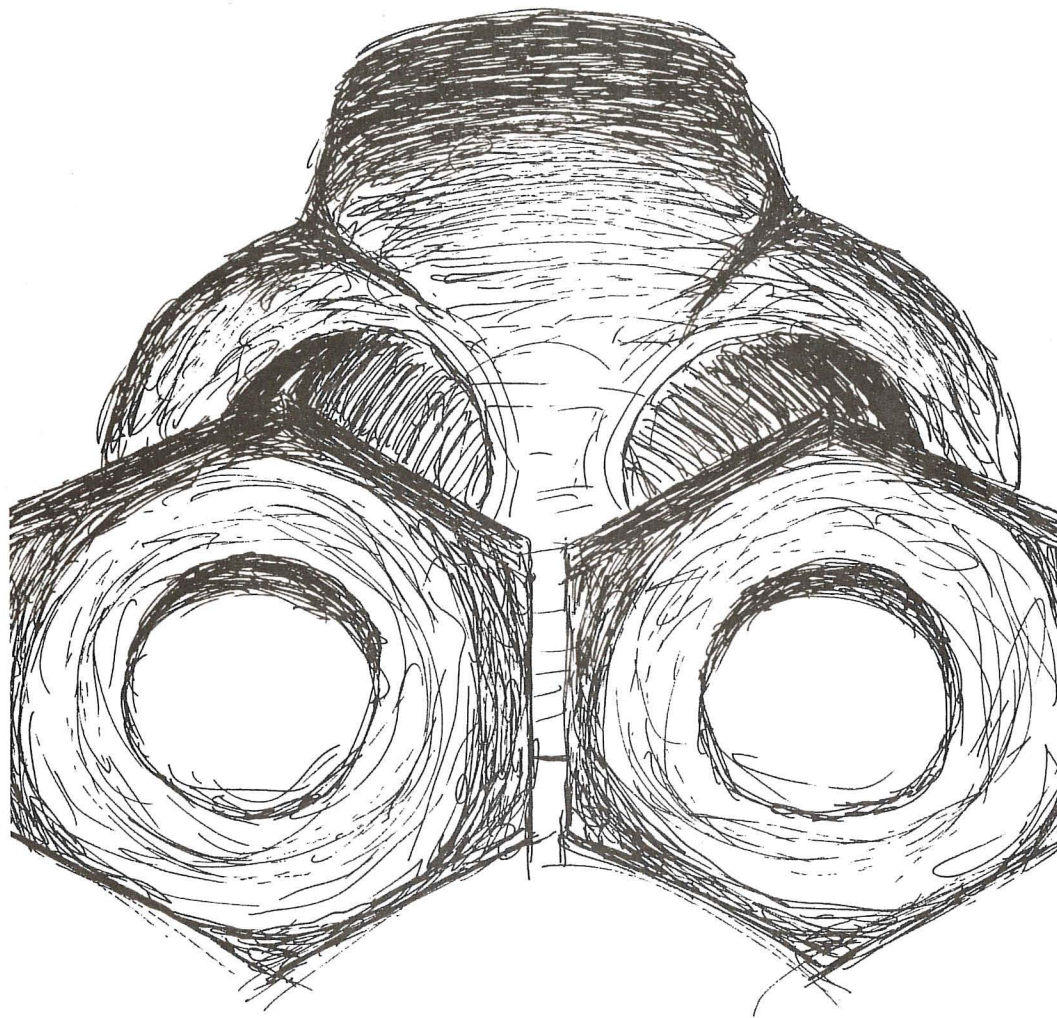
PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art

bolt nose

JASON WESTLAKE

76

PATTERNS Selection of Merit Art



after riverside drive

by louis simpson

MARY M. ANDERSON

I have been staring at a sentence
for fifteen minutes. my mind
was not made for Word for Dummies.

I take my jacket and walk.

Afternoon sun regilds the Big Mac arches.
Across Gratiot,
Burger King reigns.

I think of Emily Dickinson.
Who sees "a certain slant of light?"

Are we here to incarnate
Rockwell paintings
And Land's End commercials?

The western sun burnishes my shadow.
I think of the Word for dummies.

77

hitler's eagle's nest

MARY M. ANDERSON

*"The secret of this journey is to let the wind
Blow its dust all over your body,
To let it go on blowing, to step lightly, lightly
All the way through your ruins, and not to lose
Any sleep over the dead, who surely
Will bury their own, don't worry."*

—James Wright, *The Journey*

Hitler's Eagle's Nest, 1977

We spiral up the mountain road, twisting, turning,
pirouetting on a wheel
The bus, our flimsy carrier, groaning,
groaning to climb and climb and climb.

Tourist-y chat, pleasant hum, now changes to gasps
As we leave the tree line below, below, ever below.

A wheezy jolting stop leaves us
Rocking, swaying, bouncing.

We disembark, silent now, and the guide
Begins to spiel robotically.

Hitler, Eva Braun, Goering atrocity, suicide
She recites plodding from room to room.

I resist reluctance and follow.
Too real, too real!

On the terrace, near his chair,
I clutch the balcony rail and breathe in clean air
And the view of mountains, forest, water.

Am I here or still watching
The documentary of weeks ago?

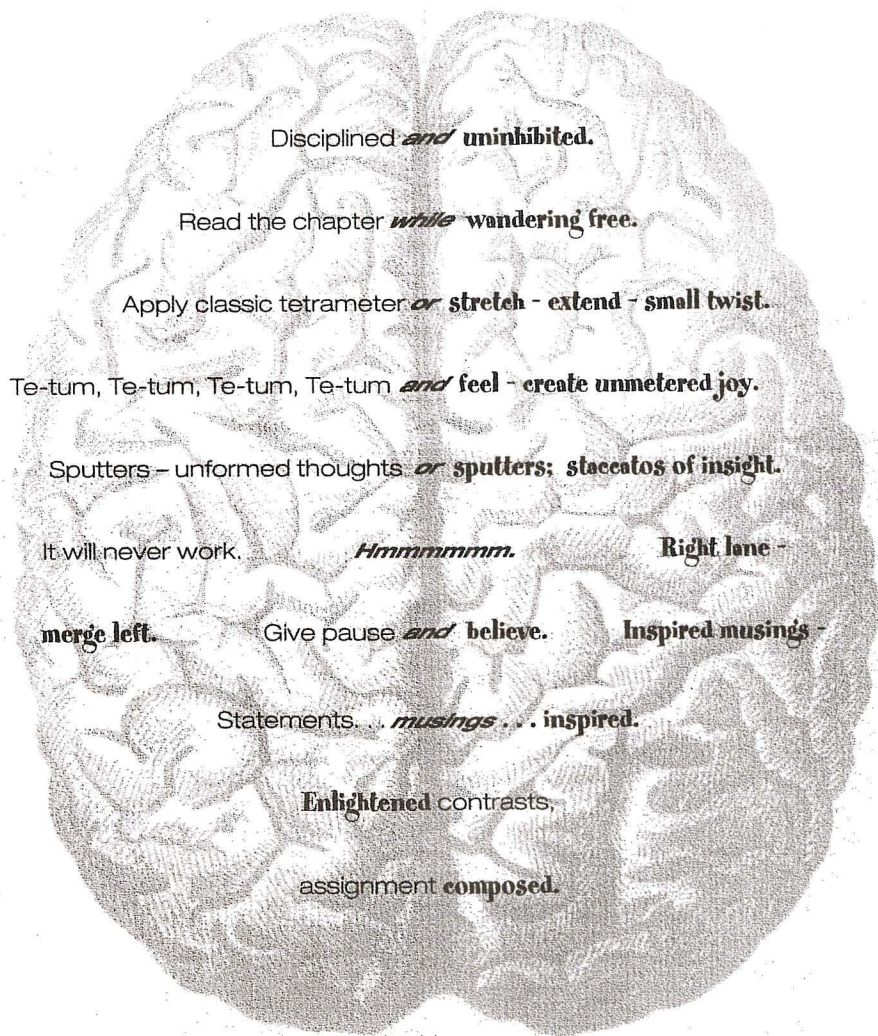
The guide details the rites of inhumanity
And the ignominious end of a monster.

We sip rum and hot water-awful!-at the aerie café,
American dollars preserving a shrine of evil.

Creaks of the bus pierce the silence
As we wind slowly down to the mountain base.

the assignment

KARI HORTOS



Disciplined *and* uninhibited.

Read the chapter *while* wandering free.

Apply classic tetrameter *or* stretch - extend - small twist.

Te-tum, Te-tum, Te-tum, Te-tum *and* feel - create unmeasured joy.

Sputters - unformed thoughts *or* sputters; staccatos of insight.

It will never work.

Hmmmmmm.

Right lane -

merge left.

Give pause *and* believe.

Inspired musings -

Statements... *musings*... inspired.

Enlightened contrasts,

assignment composed.

79

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untitled

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82

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FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Friends of the Arts
St. Clair County Community College
Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs Grant



VISITING AUTHOR:

RICHARD JACKSON is the author of 5 books of poems, most recently *Heartwall* (UMass, Juniper Prize '00), *Alive All Day* (Cleveland State Prize, '92), a Selected Poems in Slovene, and the forthcoming *Unauthorized Autobiography: New and Selected Poems* (Ashland University Poetry Press, 2003). He has also published four chapbooks, adaptations from Petrarch and other Italian poets (Black Dirt Press) and a limited edition of Petrarchan poems (Aureole Press, Univ. of Toledo). His own poems have been translated into a dozen languages. He has edited two anthologies of Slovene poetry, *The Fire Under the Moon* (Black Dirt, '99) and *Four Slovenian Poets* (Aleph, '93), and edits an eastern European Chapbook series and two journals, *Poetry Miscellany* and *mala revija*. He is also the author of a book of criticism, *Dismantling Time in Contemporary American Poetry* (winner of the Agee Prize), and *Acts of Mind: Interviews With Contemporary American Poets* (winner of Choice Award). He has been a member of the Sarajevo Committee organized by P.E.N. Int'l and has worked with various groups concerning the Balkan wars and fund raising for refugees. In 2000 he was awarded the Order of Freedom Medal for literary and humanitarian work by President of Slovenia. He has received Guggenheim NEA, NEH, and 2 Witter-Bynner Fellowships, a *Prairie Schooner* Reader's Choice Award, and the *Crazyhorse* prize, and is the winner of four Pushcart Prizes and appeared in *Best American Poems 1997* and several other anthologies, and his poems have appeared on the internet in *Poetry Daily* and *Verse Daily*. He has been a Fulbright Exchange poet to former Yugoslavia and returns each year with groups of students. He teaches at UT-Chattanooga where he directs the Meacham Writers' Conference and at Vermont College's MFA program, winning teaching awards at both schools.

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